

BYZANTIUM
IN THE
SEVENTH CENTURY

ANDREAS N. STRATOS

IV
668 - 685

Translated by
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ADOLF M. HAKKERT - PUBLISHER - AMSTERDAM

1978

I.S.B.N. 90-256-065-2

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Printed in Greece

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CHAPTER 1*

CONSTANTINE IV

When Constantine assumed the throne as Emperor¹ at Constantinople, the Byzantine Empire was passing through one of the most crucial periods of its long history. From the moment that Muawiyah had overcome his internal enemies to become sole Caliph, the struggle between Arabs and Byzantines assumed alarming proportions the magnitude of which constituted a dire threat to the Empire. It had only recently suffered a major invasion by the Arabs under Yazid, son and heir to Muawiyah, that had reached as far as the very outskirts of the capital and which was repelled only with the utmost difficulty. Amorium, one of the main bastions of Asia Minor, was still in the possession of the Arab forces.²

Muawiyah's preparations for a grand assault against the imperial capital were known in Constantinople. Africa was slowly slipping from imperial control. The Balkans were threatened by the Slavs who frequently defied Byzantine rule. An insurrection was raging in Sicily, and at the same time discontent in Italy was pronounced as a result primarily of church dissension.

Such was the ominous situation when the young monarch who had only just turned eighteen assumed the reins of government of a once all-powerful Empire.

* For detailed sources and references cited in the footnotes, see the Bibliography.

1. I should say first or senior Emperor since his brothers were co-Emperors. See following paragraphs.

2. See para. 5 of Chapter X, Vol. III of this History.

The precise year of Constantine's birth is unknown. The most probable date is A.D. 650.³ At all events he was made co-Emperor by his father Constantine III, the so-called Constans, between the 5th and 26th of April 654⁴ and was also crowned by the same.⁵ He was deemed ruler of Byzantium from that date. Constantine IV reigned a total of 17 years of which four were as sole Emperor. He occupied the throne jointly with his brothers for about thirteen years.

A question has arisen concerning the date when he took over the reins of government. He formally of course assumed power upon the death of his father. The years of his reign begin with the date of his coronation as co-Emperor, that is from April 654. Some contemporary historians have confused the issue by asserting that the reign of the emperor is measured by the years of his consulate. The latter in fact had no connection with the imperial reign since the custom of the yearly consulate had been discontinued and a good number of years are recorded as those of no consulate. To cite but a minor example of this practice: in the records of the first fourteen sessions of the Sixth Ecumenical Council is entered the 27th year of the reign of Constantine and the 13th year of his consulate. But for the fifteenth session that took place on 26 April 681, there is recorded the 28th year of his reign and the 13th of the consulate. Such was the practice since the year of reign had ended whereas the year of the consulate had not yet been completed. The matter has been brought up in connection with the death of Constantine III and the entire

3. His father was born in the latter half of 630. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, p. 335.

4. Dölger, *REGESTEN*, etc., No. 221, who supports the date 13 April 654; Grégoire, *NOTULES EPIGRAPHIQUES*; Stein, *POST-CONSULAT*, etc., p. 896.

5. The *ANECDOTA BRUXELLENSIA* of Cumont records that he was crowned by his own father and the Patriarch Paul. The first half of the statement is correct since the co-Emperors were crowned by the reigning monarch. See p. 193 of Volume II of this History. The latter half is erroneous. The Patriarch Paul died in December 653. See Brooks, the *LONDON CATALOGUE*, etc.; Grumel, *LES ACTES DES PATRIARCHES*, p. 120.

problem dealt with in Chapter XI of Volume III. I will return only to the matter of the consulship.

As stated elsewhere in the narrative, the death of the Emperor was not a prerequisite for the proclamation of his heir as consul. In the reign of Maurice, for example, his son Theodosius was made consul while Maurice was still Emperor. An identical step had been taken by Heraclius I in the case of his son. Beginning in the 7th Century, the practice of citing the consulate had fallen into disuse in the official acts where only the year of reign and the Indiction were of primary importance. According to the traditional custom which was not adhered to strictly henceforward, the Emperor assumed the consulate on the first of January of the year following his assumption of power.⁶

Constantine proclaimed himself consul⁷ when intelligence of the murder of his father had reached Constantinople. It is more than likely that this knowledge reached the capital after a considerable lapse of time in view of measures taken in Sicily by the insurrectionists to withhold the news as long as possible from the royal palace.⁸ It may well be that he was not proclaimed straightway in view of the mourning period that had been imposed at the court. At all events, on the basis of the acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, if in fact the dates recorded are accurate, the consulship must have commenced between the 16th of September and early November 668. It is possible, moreover, that the Emperor himself set the date for the beginning of the consulate at some time between these latter dates.⁹

6. Stein, *POST-CONSULAT*, etc., p. 869; Guiland, *LE CONSULAT*, etc.; Grumel, *LA CHRONOLOGIE*, pp. 346, 347.

7. Inaccurately reported as crowned. Constantine had already been invested and therefore Emperor since 654.

8. Brooks, *REVIEW of Kulakovski*, etc.; Grierson, *CATALOGUE OF THE BYZANTINE COINS*, etc.

9. It was the usual practice for the Emperor to designate the beginning date of his consulate. Maurice set the commencement of his consulate a year after ascending the throne, Phocas a month after his investment as Emperor. Heraclius who was crowned Emperor on 6 October 610 designated his consulate as beginning on 13 January 611, or three months later. See

I have perhaps dwelt at undue length on the second matter but only because, unfortunately, some contemporary historians have associated the date of the consulate with that of the death of Constantine III and on the basis of false assumptions have arrived at a date which no single source records and on the contrary conflicts with the date recorded in a more or less official extant source.

2

As pointed out, Constantine reigned either alone or with his brothers for seventeen years.¹⁰

It is not easy to delineate the character of the Emperor. His moderation and religious tolerance and his acceptance, more or less, of the view of Rome, gained for him the favour of the church which in turn undoubtedly influenced the historians in his favour.¹¹ From the point of view of vigour and drive, he was very unlike his father or his great-grandfather Heraclius I. I do not agree with those historians who describe him as one of the most efficient and able sovereigns of Byzantium.¹² All historians without exception considered him as a good and kind Orthodox Emperor.¹³ There exists no doubt that he was Orthodox in the sense of orthodoxy at the time. And in fact he was a good, mild and just ruler. The moderation and understanding which he showed, after crushing the rebellion in Sicily, and especially his desire at all costs to resolve the religious dissension which had kept Byzantium and the West at loggerheads for so long, made him extremely popular with the Byzantine and Latin chroniclers. On the contrary, the Eastern chroniclers, particularly the Syrian,

CHRONICON PASCHALE, ed. BONN, I, pp. 690 and 703; STEIN, OP. CIT.

10. Theophanes, p. 352; Nicephorus, CHRONICON BREVA, p. 99; Constantine Porphyrogenetus, DE ADM. IMP., p. 88; SYNOPSIS SATHAS, p. 113; LEO THE GRAMMARIAN, p. 159; CHRONICON ALTINATE ET GRADENSE, pp. 26 and 108.

11. Finlay, HISTORY OF GREECE, I, 381.

12. Amantos, HISTORY, etc., I, 333.

13. SYNOPSIS SATHAS, p. 113; Euphraemius, CHRONICLE, the CAESARS, 65; ANECDOTA BRUXELLENSIA, ed. Cumont.

do not show any such sympathy.¹⁴

Constantine was not a soldier. With the exception of the expedition to Sicily, about which more in the following paragraph, he had not once led his troops personally in any battle. As a matter of fact, when he campaigned against the Bulgars he found various pretexts to abandon the expedition¹⁵ with disastrous results. The imperial army disintegrated and the Bulgars occupied a large slice of Byzantine territory south of the Danube. The lack of drive and bellicosity on the part of Constantine becomes even more apparent when bearing in mind that although he had concluded peace with the Arabs and the Lombards and no enemy seriously threatened the Empire at the time, he made no effort to expel the new invaders. It is true that these latter were a warlike people, but they were not numerous and had not as yet become thoroughly and sufficiently organized as a force to withstand or challenge seriously a well-established and powerful Empire. Constantine's lack of appropriate action in this instance was destined to bring serious consequences to Byzantium, for the new race of invaders was to become one of the Empire's most dangerous foes. It is for these reasons that I disagree radically with those historians who regard Constantine IV as one of the most able and outstanding emperors.

Constantine married in 668¹⁶ a certain Anastasia.¹⁷ Information concerning her identity and the date of her death is woefully lacking. It is certain however that she expired after A.D. 711, that is, after the murder of her son Justinian II and the death of her grandson Theodosius. Anastasia bore Constantine two sons, Justinian and Heraclius. Whether she had other children is not known. Concerning Heraclius, no information

14. Michael the Syrian, *CHRONICLE*, II, 455.

15. I say various pretexts because I suspect other reasons that are not recorded by the chroniclers. The matter will be dealt with at length in another Chapter.

16. No source says as much. Since, however, his son Justinian was born in 669 and he himself in 650, he was in all probability married around 668.

17. Theophanes, pp. 367, 20 and 380, 19; Nicephorus, p. 47, 30; *CHRONICON ALTIATUM ET GRADENSE*, p. 108; Grierson, *THE TOMBS AND OBITS* etc., p. 50.

whatsoever exists, regarding the date of his birth or of his life in general. Even his existence would have been unknown had not a letter survived written by Constantine to Pope Benedict II.¹⁸ With the letter, the Emperor had sent locks of his children's hair to the Pope who received them in an official ceremony, as the *Liber Pontificalis* records,¹⁹ at the head of the clergy and the army of Rome. This gesture was entirely symbolic and signified that the sons of Constantine had been placed under the protection of the Pope who in accordance with the traditional custom symbolically adopted the imperial offspring.²⁰

Constantine III (Constans) had as Emperor, in 659, invested as co-Emperors his other sons Heraclius and Tiberius. The precise date of this investiture is unknown, but from the acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council one concludes that it took place between April 24 and the 9th of August 659.²¹ According to Theophanes,²² once having suppressed the mutiny 'he reigned over the Romans together with his brothers Tiberius and Heraclius.' On all coins that were minted in the reign of Constantine IV, his brothers are depicted until 681 as co-Emperors. But more about the brothers of Constantine in Chapter VII.

Another matter which concerns one here is the epithet 'Pogonatus' by which Constantine IV was wrongly known for centuries. I have dwelt at great length with this in the previous volume of this History.²³ As repeatedly pointed out, there were no contemporary chroniclers, the nearest to the times being

18. Grumel, *LA CHRONOLOGIE*. He was Pope from 26 June 684 to 8 May 685.

19. *LIBER PONTIFICALIS*, I, 364; Jaffé-Wattenbach, *REGESTA*, etc., p. 148; Hodgkin, *ITALY* etc., VI, 348; Diehl, *LE MONDE ORIENTAL*, p. 243.

20. Pauli Diaconis, *HISTORIA LANGOBARDORUM*, IV, 38; L.P., fn. 5, p. 365 by Duchêsne; Amantos, *HISTORY*, I, 333.

21. Mansi, XI, 209f; Agnelli, L.P. *ECCLESIAE RAVENNATIS*, pp. 350, 351 and fn. 7; Dölger, *REGESTEN*, No. 221; Ostrogorsky, *A HISTORY* etc., p. 121; Brooks, *THE SUCCESSORS OF HERACLIUS*, p. 394; Grégoire, *NOTULES* etc.; Bréhier, *LES DERNIERS HERACLIDES*, p. 181.

22. Theophanes, p. 352.

23. Stratos, *BYZANTIUM IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY*, Vol. III, p. 7 ff.

Nicephorus and Theophanes, both of whom are unaware of this sobriquet. The Latin chroniclers are equally ignorant of the appellation. Constantine Porphyrogennetus uses 'Pogonatus' when referring to Constantine III (Constans).²⁴ Subsequent chroniclers were apparently confused by a succession of three Constantines one after the other and mistakenly attached the epithet to Constantine IV, creating the legend that he was so-called by the people because he went to Sicily beardless and returned to Constantinople with whiskers. Manasses, in fact, composed some beautiful verse describing the fact.²⁵ Thereafter, chroniclers and unfortunately even contemporary historians have persisted in identifying Constantine IV as 'Pogonatus'. Brooks was the first of the modern historians to challenge the identification.²⁶ He attained his conclusions by fine reasoning, but especially by the coinage on which the visage of Constantine IV is depicted with a small beard, and by the lists of the tombs of the emperors as provided by Constantine Porphyrogennetus. The interpretation by Brooks has now been generally accepted by such authorities as Vassiliev, Kulakovski, and Ostrogorsky among others. I have supplemented the evidence by citing various contemporary sources²⁷ which appear to have escaped the attention of Brooks, and which at all events leave no room for doubt as to the identity of Constantine III (Constans) as the rightful 'Pogonatus'. He, moreover, as Brooks points out, appears on his coins with a richly flowing beard.

24. DE ADM. IMP., pp. 84, 88, 226.

25. Manasses, CHRONICLE, vv. 3856-3860. (Free translation) 'This Emperor, the crowd and all sorts of people called Pogonatus, saying this was so because when he sailed off against Mizizius, he was but a smoothfaced youth, with soft down on his cheeks, no growth on his chin, and returned as a full-bearded man.'

26. Brooks, WHO WAS CONSTANTINE POGONATUS?

27. Une Vie Grecque du Pape St. Martin, ed. Peeters, An. Bol., Vol. 51, 1933; T. SPOUDIS, HYPOMNISTICON, ed. Devreesse, An. Bol., Vol. 53/1935; LIVES OF SAINTS RELATING TO MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, in Migne, P.G., Vol. 90, pp. 209f.; LETTER OF POPE AGATHON in Mansi, XI, 187, 188, EX LIBELLO SYNODICO.

The situation for Byzantium was critical in the extreme for at the very time Constantine III was murdered and the rebellion in Sicily was temporarily successful, the Arabs had launched their massive attack against the Empire to reach Chalcedon itself opposite the capital.

As pointed out in the preceding volume, the murder of Constantine was not perpetrated by a single irate palace intimate. It was not personally motivated but was engineered by a large faction of malcontents. Another version of the murder mentioned by Theophanes²⁸ states that 'Mizizius with his accomplices rose up against the Emperor in the baths and slew him.' It should be pointed out again that in this revolution the clergy of Sicily also had a hand, as one can conclude from the letter of Pope Gregory II to Leo the Isaurian. Michael the Syrian also records the rebellion of Mizizius or Mezezius.²⁹ Mizizius was proclaimed Emperor. The sources do not provide much information regarding this usurper.³⁰

Who was this person whom the palace circles in Sicily, senators and the army, or at least a section of the imperial army, proclaimed Emperor?

Most sources, both Byzantine and Eastern, name him as an Armenian patricius. It appears in fact to concern an Armenian prince of the family of Gnoumiens,³¹ probably a son or grandson of the great Armenian general Mzez Gnuni, who commanded the Armeniakon theme and fought under Heraclius I against the Persians. He was slain by the Armenians in 638-639 during the rebellion of David Zacharouni.³²

28. Theophanes, p. 352, fn. 9.

29. Michael the Syrian, II, 455.

30. Theophanes, p. 352 (who says very graceful and most handsome); Zonaras, III, 316, 'statuesque and most handsome'; Manasses, vv. 3845, 3846, 'a man of graceful eye and beautiful visage.'; Leo the Grammarian, p. 109, 'most graceful and handsome'; Agapius, p. 231/491, 'prudent, strong and courageous'.

31. Saint-Martin in Lebeau, HISTOIRE etc., fn. 1, p. 606; Toumanoff, CAUCASUS AND BYZANTIUM, in Traditio, Vol. 27 (1971).

32. See Vol. II of this History, p. 138.

Mezezius was commander of the imperial guard, a count of the Opsikion.³³ He was, in other words, one of the senior officers of the Byzantine army in Sicily. The fact that a part of the Byzantine army participated in the conspiracy and rebellion is concluded not only from the certainty that one of its leaders was proclaimed Emperor, but from Latin and Byzantine sources which explicitly record the active participation of the Byzantine army.³⁴ It is true that Pauli Diaconis³⁵ and others who use him as a source state that Mezezius was crowned Emperor despite the objections of the army of the Anatolikon theme. Duchêsne in the L.P. writes that Pauli Diaconis misunderstood the passage in the Vita of Pope Adeodatus in which are recorded the murder of Constantine III, the proclamation of Mezezius as Emperor and the crushing of the mutiny.³⁶ On the other hand, the part of the army of the Anatolikon theme which was stationed in Sicily could well have been displeased with the choice of an Armenian as Emperor whose father and grandfather was a strategus of the Armeniakon theme. It should be noted that all these events are wrongly inserted in the Vita of Pope Adeodatus (672-676) since they occurred at the time Vitalian was Pope. The latter opposed the rebellion. In fact, it appears that he had contributed much to its suppression. His actions were appreciated by Constantine IV himself in a letter written by the Emperor to Pope Donus.³⁷

All the military forces, however, did not take part in the conspiracy, nor did they endorse the subsequent actions. The strategus and patricius Severus was commander of the imperial fleet in Sicily. He succeeded in collecting the units of the navy and despite the attempts of the army escaped with the ships in the general direction of the Byzantine coast.³⁸ It is more than

33. Letter of Pope Gregory II to Leo, the so-called Isaurian. See Migne, Vol. 89, p. 520. Opsikion was the name of a section of the imperial guard, units of which were garrisoned in Bithynia and other provinces near Constantinople where the Opsikion theme had been established.

34. L.P., I, 346; GODEFRIDI VITERBIENSIS, p. 392; Zonaras, III, 316.

35. Pauli Diaconis, V, 12.

36. Bury, A HISTORY etc., II, 303, fn. 1.

37. Mansi, XI, 200.

38. S.O.C., pp. 251, 252. In gratitude for his deliverance, his wife built the church of Severus in Constantinople.

likely that intelligence of the rebellion and other information were brought to the capital by Severus.

The atmosphere in Constantinople was not pleasant. The assault of the Arabs had only recently been repulsed. Constantine realized the danger facing his capital and began to restore the sea walls which had fallen into disrepair.³⁹

News of the murder of Constantine III and the proclamation of Mezezius as Emperor agitated both officials and subjects. Neither army nor navy could be spared for the West as long as Amorium, which constituted an Arab strong base for future attacks on the capital and was therefore a mortal danger to Byzantium, remained in enemy hands. Fortunately Amorium was recaptured by the cubicularius Andreas, a brilliant officer,⁴⁰ in the winter of 668-669.⁴¹ Only then was it possible to mount an expedition against the insurrectionists in Sicily. But considerable time was needed for Constantine to prepare the campaign and to collect intelligence as to whether the imperial army in Italy was involved with the rebellion. The Byzantine fleet had in the meantime joined the units of the fleet of Sicily and thus became a powerful striking force.

In fact, the army of Italy had not joined the insurrectionists. On the contrary it was hostilely disposed to the army of Sicily.⁴²

Accompanied by a powerful fleet, 'with a vast navy', as the chroniclers say,⁴³ the youthful sovereign set off in late January or early February 669 for Sicily. But before the departure and since he could not draw troops from those areas that were threatened by the Arabs, he instructed the Exarch of Italy and of Africa to

39. Grégoire, *NOTULES EPIGRAPHIQUES*.

40. Michael the Syrian, II, 452.

41. Theophanes, p. 351.

42. Hodgkin, *ITALY*, etc., VI, 282; Hartmann, *GESCHICHTE ITALIENS*, usw., II, 251, 252.

43. Theophanes, p. 352; Cedrenus, p. 763; George the Monk, p. 718; Zonaras, III, 316; Manasses, vv. 3853, 3854; *SYNOPSIS SATHAS*, p. 113; Leo the Grammarian, p. 159; Joel, p. 48; Agapius, p. 231; Michael the Syrian, II, 451 and 455; *CHRONICLE* of 1234, p. 224; Andrea Dandolo, *CHRONICON*, p. 100; *HISTORIA MISCELLAE*, p. 137; *ISIDORIANAE CONTINUATIONES*, p. 345; *GODEFRIDI VITERBIENSIS*, Pantheon, p. 392; Isidorus Pacensis, *CHRONICON*, p. 1259.

send forces to Sicily where he himself would assume supreme command upon arrival on the island. And in fact, Pope Vitalian exhorted the troops to support the Emperor. Soon men began to flock to Sicily⁴⁴ from Istria, parts of Campania, from Rome and from Sardinia which was then under the administration of the Exarch of Italy. Some historians⁴⁵ have maintained that the Exarch of Italy Gregory was given command of the army. But I must point out emphatically that not a single source whatsoever states as much. Moreover, the Exarch of Italy had no authority in Sicily which initially was administered directly from Constantinople and had already been organized into a 'theme'⁴⁶ by Constantine III. Furthermore, the Exarch of Italy could not command military units belonging to the Exarch of Africa unless there was a specific imperial order to this effect, but no record of such an order is to be found in the sources. According to Byzantine, Eastern and certain other sources cited in the footnote below, when Constantine arrived in Sicily he soon mastered the situation, and seized and executed Mezezius and his father's murderers. Among those executed were the patricius Justinian⁴⁷ and other members of the court as well as senators. Constantine then committed an outrage that does not flatter him. When Germanus, son of the patricius Justinian and subsequent Patriarch of Constantinople (715-730) had learned of his father's execution, he hurled certain insults at the emperor. As a punishment, he was castrated even though he had already reached full manhood.⁴⁸

The *Liber Pontificalis* records that the armies of Italy and Africa crushed the rebellion in Sicily and slew Mezezius and his subordinates. Their heads were sent to Constantinople. On the basis of this information and that supplied by Pauli Diaconis who

44. L.P., I, 346; Pauli Diaconis, V, 12; CHRONICON CASINENSE.

45. Ostrogorsky, A HISTORY, etc., p. 123; Guillou, Régionalisme etc. pp.159, 160.

46. See Vol. III of this History, p. 250; Diehl, ETUDES etc., p.7.

47. Theophanes, p. 352, fn. 9; Cedrenus, p. 763; Zonaras, III, 316. Agapius, p. 231, writes that he executed, imprisoned and exiled many.

48. Theophanes, p. 352 and fn. 9; Cedrenus, p. 763; Zonaras, III, 316; Joel, p. 48; Lambros, HISTORY etc., Vol. III, p. 733.

writes precisely the same,⁴⁹ Brooks has argued that Constantine never had gone to Sicily.⁵⁰ Moreover, to support his contention that this expedition could not have taken place, he maintains that Constantine could not have abandoned Constantinople at the time since, on the basis of the chronology of Wellhausen,⁵¹ the rebellion of Saborius had occurred in the Autumn and Winter of 668, and the major assault by the Arabs in the Spring of 669. Concerning this matter and the rather peculiar theories and chronology of Wellhausen and Brooks, I have dealt with at great length in the preceding volume,⁵² wherein I showed that these arguments conflict with the specific evidence of nearly all the sources. Brooks also argues that although the *Vita* of Adeodatus was written in the 8th Century, it would have been impossible for the author of that life to have been ignorant of the events, and hence not to have recorded the arrival of the Emperor in Sicily irrespective of whether he had made an oversight or had forgotten the dates. The L.P. deals primarily with the lives of the Popes. As has been pointed out, these events were wrongly inserted in the *Vita* of Adeodatus since they took place in the age of Vitalian. This fact alone indicates that the chronicler of the *Vita* was poorly informed both concerning the chronology and the events. Yet, irrespective of this fact, as an afterthought Brooks appends to his article another statement. On the basis of a passage in Michael the Syrian (p. 455), he writes that if the death of Mezezius had in fact occurred in February of 669, then the expedition could have after all taken place.⁵³ Regardless of the reliability or no of the L.P. for these

49. Paul's sole source for these events is the L.P., hence in substance there is but a single source. See Duchêsne, footnote below the *Vita* of Pope Adeodatus, and Bury, *OP. CIT.*, II, 303.

50. Brooks, *THE SICILIAN EXPEDITION* etc.

51. Wellhausen, *DIE KÄMPFE DER ARABER* usw., pp. 422-424.

52. Vol. III, Chapter X, para. 5, pp. 236 ff.

53. Brooks persists in supporting the mistaken chronology of the Arab incursions in this period. Since he is not sure whether Constantine III was murdered in July 668, as the L.P. records (oddly enough he here has doubts about the source), or in September 668, a date for which no reference is available, he nevertheless makes the following conclusions: If in fact the assassination took place in July 668, since Michael the Syrian records that the

events, one could reject these theories of Brooks by stating that it was impossible for the commander of the troops who had gone to Italy, even though he be the Exarch of Italy himself, to order the execution of senators or members of the palace circles who bore the title of patricius, that is, having the same rank, without the previous approval of the Emperor. I could accept the contention that when these forces arrived in Sicily, there being no military opposition, the insurrection was immediately crushed and Mezezius was slain. But the other punishments were ordered by Constantine himself who had gone to Sicily in accordance with all the sources. The L.P. does not state that Constantine never arrived in Sicily, but merely records that the rebellion was crushed by the armies of the two Exarchates. It ignores all the punishments meted out by the Emperor barring the death of Mezezius.

In a subsequent study, 'The Successors of Heraclius',⁵⁴ Brooks makes no mention of Constantine's visit to Sicily, but he agrees that the repression of the revolt took place in February 669 (using Michael the Syrian as a source), that it was accomplished by the combined forces of the two Exarchates (on the basis of the L.P.), that the patricius Justinian and others were executed, and that Germanus was mutilated (on the basis of Byzantine and Eastern sources). He has attempted in other words to make a collation of varied sources to reach certain conclusions which neither strengthen nor substantiate his theories.

The theories of Brooks were nevertheless accepted by Kulakovsky⁵⁵ and Ostrogorsky,⁵⁶ the latter of whom, oddly enough, accepts the evidence of Cedrenus concerning the burial of Constantine III. After describing the departure of

insurrection of Mezezius was crushed seven months later, then Constantine had enough time to go to Sicily in February and to return in time to meet the Spring offensive of the Arabs which, it should be noted, occurred in the latter part of the Spring, or, in my opinion, at the close of the Spring of the previous year.

54. In C.M.H., II.

55. Kulakovski, *HISTORY*, III, 235.

56. Ostrogorsky, *A HISTORY* etc., p. 123.

Constantine for Sicily, the punishment of the rebels and so on, Cedrenus⁵⁷ records that Constantine carried the body of his father to the capital and interred him in the church of the Holy Apostles next to his grandfather. I have dealt with the burial of Constantine III in the preceding volume.⁵⁸ I cannot understand by what sound reasoning Ostrogorsky rejects the entire narrative of Cedrenus, accepting only that latter passage which is so interwoven with the entire description of the events without which the narrative would become completely incomprehensible.

The suppression of this rebellion by the armies of the Exarchates is accepted by both Bréhier⁵⁹ and Guillou.⁶⁰

The expedition and the chain of events as recorded by the Byzantine, Eastern and many Latin sources are accepted by Diehl,⁶¹ Amantos,⁶² Lambros,⁶³ Paparrigopoulos,⁶⁴ Bury,⁶⁵ Lebeau,⁶⁶ Grégoire,⁶⁷ Caspar,⁶⁸ Hodgkin,⁶⁹ Finlay,⁷⁰ Hartmann,⁷¹ and others.

Following the restoration of discipline, Constantine IV ordered the return of those troops of the Anatolikon theme who had accompanied his father to their original headquarters,⁷² then himself returned to Constantinople.

57. Cedrenus, pp. 763, 764.

58. See Vol. III of this History, Chapt. XI, para. 3.

59. Bréhier, *LES DERNIERS HERACLIDES*, p. 181.

60. Guillou, *REGIONALISME ET INDEPENDENCE* etc., p. 160.

61. Diehl, *LE MONDE ORIENTAL*, p. 240.

62. Amantos, *HISTORY* etc., I, 328.

63. Lambros, *HISTORY OF GREECE*, III, 732, 733.

64. Paparrigopoulos, *HISTORY* etc., III, 235.

65. Bury, *A HISTORY* etc., II, 303.

66. Lebeau, *SAINT MARTIN*, XI, 406.

67. Grégoire, *NOTULES EPIGRAPHIQUES*.

68. Caspar, *GESCHICHTE DES PAPSTTUMS*.

69. Hodgkin, *ITALY* etc., V, 282.

70. Finlay, *A HISTORY* etc., I, 381.

71. Hartmann, *GESCHICHTE ITALIENS* usw., II, 251, 252.

72. Hartmann, *IBID.*

CHAPTER II

WAR WITH THE ARABS

A brilliant administrator,⁷³ Muawiyah had organized a mighty army with which he was able to overpower his enemies and have himself proclaimed supreme Caliph. This military machine known as the army of Syria consisted for the most part of Arabs who had settled in Syria before the actual occupation or had migrated hither after the conquest. The former, who were once Christians, had been used frequently by the Byzantines either as light cavalry or as auxiliary troops. After the Arab conquest they converted to Islam and under the influence of the fanatical Syrians⁷⁴ became zealots of the new religion. The latter, that is those who came with the conquest or soon thereafter who had already become Moslems were for the most part from tribes of northern Arabia.⁷⁵ The two basic military corps, one centred on Damascus and the other at Emesa, were the pillars of Muawiyah's strength. Since Muawiyah's control depended upon these armies, it was essential that the discipline and especially the military effectiveness of the two bodies be maintained. In addition to the razzias, yearly expeditions therefore became the practice.

The Arabs conducted their expeditions to the East with the two armies based on the great camps at Koufa and Basra. For the march to the West they used troops centred on Misr (Cairo) and later, when Kairouan was founded, on Tunis (al-Ifrikyā) with troops that had settled in the region or had been assembled locally with reinforcements from Egypt and the Djunds⁷⁶

73. Lammens, *ETUDES SUR LE REGNE DE ... MOAWIYA*.

74. As Christians, the Syrians were zealous Monophysites. Those who converted to Islam carried their extreme fanaticism to the new religion.

75. Gibb, *ARAB-BYZANTINE RELATIONS* etc.

76. The Arabs had initially organized Syria and Palestine into four and subsequently five large military districts known as the Djunds.

of Palestine. In their operations against the Byzantine Empire they employed the centrally located corps of Emesa, of Damascus and Kinnesrin with reinforcements from Mesopotamia, Koufa and the two administrations of Palestine. It was their custom to conduct two invasions against the Byzantines annually, one in the Summer and if there was enough of fodder for the horses a smaller raid in the Winter.⁷⁷

Such was in general lines the military organization of the Arabs. But without diminishing the pressure against East and West, Muawiyah concentrated his attack primarily on the very nerve centre of Byzantium, no less than the great city of Constantinople itself. For this ultimate objective he turned his attention to the organization and augmentation of his fleet. After the naval engagement of Phoenix,⁷⁸ the Arab fleet did not again appear except briefly in A.D. 665-666 for minor operations of a piratical nature or to transport supplies to the army that had invaded Asia Minor.

This chapter will deal with the war between Byzantines and Arabs in the course of the reign of Constantine IV. Due to the unfortunate fact that the sources are scanty or very contradictory, many questions must of necessity remain unanswered. There exist so many riddles to unravel and so many absurd claims impossible to accept that indeed a very long time will come to pass before one can hope to find some modicum of truth. But an attempt will be made to relate the facts as they appear from extant sources, pointing out the perplexities, justifying my personal reservations and explaining why it is impossible to accept certain arbitrary conclusions. Wherever feasible, what are reasonable answers or explanations in my judgment will be suggested for what they are worth and wherever it is impossible to provide the answer the problems will be pinpointed so that hopefully some scholars or historians will be able eventually to separate fact from fancy.

77. Canard, *BYZANTIUM AND THE MUSLIM WORLD*, p. 697.

78. See Vol. III of the present History, Chapt. II.

It has been pointed out in Chapter X of Volume III that the commander of the army of Egypt⁷⁹ Muawiyah ibn Hudayg had launched an attack against Africa (al-Ifrikyā), a part of which he looted. Upon the murder of Constantine III (Constans) in Sicily and the ensuing withdrawal of imperial troops of the Anatolicon theme from the island, the Arab leaders in Egypt deemed the moment opportune for a raid against Sicily for plunder.

Information concerning the invasion derives exclusively from Latin and Arab sources. Byzantine and Eastern chroniclers make no reference to it. The Latin sources all agree as regards the results of the invasion but do not concur in the dating. Arab sources also differ in chronology but coincide more or less with the Latin records concerning the outcome.

The *Liber Pontificalis*, the primary source from which the other Latin chroniclers draw, records in the *Vita* of Pope Adeodatus⁸⁰ that the Saracens came to Sicily soon after the suppression of the rebellion of Mezezius, conquered the “said city” (meaning Syracuse which was mentioned in association with the Mezezius revolt) and massacred the inhabitants who fled to fortified retreats or the mountains.⁸¹ After seizing great amounts of plunder including quantities of bronze which had been transported hither from Rome, they returned to Alexandria.

Pauli Diaconis⁸² writes that when the Saracens who were “lords and masters of Alexandria and Egypt” learned of the departure of the army, they launched a surprise attack on Sicily with many ships and so on, concurring with the L.P. With this narrative and the various dates agree also John Diaconis, Bedae, Romualdi of Salerno, Andrea Dandolo, who associates this

79. Historical note XVI of Vol. III, pp. 278, 279.

80. L.P., I, 346.

81. Irrespective of the fact that all these events did not take place in the age of Adeodatus, as pointed out in the previous chapter, the entire narrative is rather confused. One can well ask that since they occupied only Syracuse, how could they have massacred the inhabitants who had taken refuge in the mountains.

82. Pauli Diaconis, *CHRONICLE*, V, 13.

expedition with the conquest of Carthage (A.D. 697), and the *Gesta Episc. Neapolitanorum*.⁸³

Arab historians relate the incident as follows: 1) Baladhuri⁸⁴ states that the first invasion of Sicily took place during the Caliphate of Muawiyah Ibn Sufyan and on the orders of Muawiyah Ibn Hudayg. Using Wakidi as a source, Baladhuri records that Muawiyah did not himself lead the expedition but ordered Abdallah Ibn Kais al Fezari to take command, and that Muawiyah Ibn Sufyan sent the captured booty to Basra for transportaion to India. 2) En Noweiri⁸⁵ records precisely the same but adds that Abdallah Ibn Kais was the first Moslem to enter Sicily, that he captured many towns (?), seized numerous prisoners, and carried away much plunder including idols in gold or decorated with pearls.⁸⁶ All this booty was delivered to Caliph Muawiyah who in turn sent it to India to sell for a better price in view of the fact that the Moslems abhorred images. 3) Ibn Adhari⁸⁷ writes identically but dates the invasion in the 46th year of the Hegira (March 666 - March 667). Other Arabs also record nearly the same.

Amari⁸⁸ has attempted to prove that this was the third Arab invasion of Sicily. I have already written at great length concerning his theory.⁸⁹

To reach some relatively reasonable conclusions one must bear in mind certain facts: 1) No invasion could have taken place

83. John Diaconis, p. 9; Bedae, *CHRONICA*, p. 314, who records the date A.D. 557(!); Romualdi *SALERNITANI*, p. 130; Andrea Dandolo, p. 121; *GESTA EPIS. NEAPOLITANORUM*, p. 419, who all date the expedition in the years of Adeodatus (672-676).

84. Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, p. 375.

85. En Noweiri, ed. De Slane, p. 115; En Noweiri, *HISTORY OF SICILY*, ed. Caussin, p. 8.

86. This was the name given by Arabs to images that were worked in gold and silver and were inlaid with precious stones.

87. Ibn Adhari, *Al Bayan*, etc., ed. Fagnan, II, 12, 13.

88. Amari, *STORIA DE MUSULMANI DI SICILIA*, I, 82-89.

89. Volume IV, pp. 116f and pp. 286, 287. Amari conflicts drastically with Baladhuri and Noweiri who record that this was the first landing by the Arabs in Sicily.

before 668 due to the presence on the island of Constantine III with a strong army. 2) Up until March or April 669, in addition to the military forces assembled in Sicily from the Exarchates of Africa and Italy, Constantine IV arrived with a powerful fleet, as stated in the previous chapter. 3) Muawiyah Ibn Hudayg was replaced towards the close of 669-670 when the military district of Ifrikya (Africa) was established by Uqbah ben Nafi.⁹⁰ Beginning 672 and onwards, the Arabs were preoccupied with the major attack against Constantinople and in this campaign Abdallah Ibn Kais, who commanded a squadron of the Arab fleet patrolling the coasts and the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean, also took part. 4) From A.D. 678-679 until 692-693 there existed a peace treaty between the Byzantines and Arabs. Now, using all this information, and since the attack against Sicily was ordered by Muawiyah Ibn Hudayg, the only feasible date for the attack is confined to the period between the middle of 669 and early 670. It is my impression that some time between the middle to the end of 669, taking advantage of the withdrawal of the imperial armies and fleet from Sicily,⁹¹ the Arabs decided to plunder the island. Leading an armada of 200 ships, Abdallah Ibn Kais made a landing near Syracuse which city he took by assault. Many of the panic-stricken inhabitants took to the mountains and other fortified towns. The sacking of the city was frightening as were the massacre and the taking of prisoners. The supply of copper and bronze that survived from the large quantities Constantine III had brought from Rome were taken by the Arabs. All houses and especially churches were looted and the icons removed for eventual sale in India. Abdallah feared an attack by the army of the Exarchate, and since his mission had been successful and the ships were laden with plunder and captives, he set off for Alexandria. This is, in my opinion, the only possible sequence of events that can surely

90. En-Noweiri, *OP.CIT.*, p. 117; Al-Hakam, ed Gateau, p. 253; Ibn Adhari, *OP. CIT.*, p. 13; Ubayd Allah, ed. Levi-Provençal, p. 37.

91. Pauli Diaconis, *OP. CIT.*, V, 13.

be drawn from the extant sources.⁹²

2

To describe the military operations of the Arabs in Africa is even more difficult, for there is not only the problem of chronology, which is most conflicting in the highly unreliable Arab and Eastern sources, but the Byzantine chroniclers appear to ignore events in Africa, and there are described certain events which one finds very difficult to accept as factual.

Arab sources state that in A.D. 669-670 there was established an independent Arab military district for the province of Africa. These sources disagree as to who the first governor was.⁹³ At all events, in A.D. 670 (50th year of the Hegira) Uqbah undertook a great razzia in Africa. Uqbah ben Nafi al-Firi was an outstanding warrior and distinguished leader from the ranks of the successors, that is, from among the direct descendants of the Companions of the Prophet. He was the nephew of the famous Amr Ibn al-As who had subjected Egypt and expelled the Byzantines when in 645 the latter had attempted to recover the country. Uqbah occupied parts of Libya and Tripolitania but there is disagreement regarding the date of these conquests. The Byzantine and Eastern chroniclers

92. Most contemporary historians agree with these conclusions. Bury, *OP. CIT.*, II, 310; Bréhier, *VIE ET MORT DE BYZANCE*, p. 62; Lebeau-St. Martin, XI, 408; Diehl, *L'AFRIQUE BYZANTINE*, p. 572, on the basis of Pauli Diaconis; Cheira, *LA LUTTE* etc., p. 128, from Arab sources for the year 669, although Hakam places this expedition in the 50th year (A.D. 670-671); Hartmann, *GESCHICHTE* etc.; Lynn White Jr., A.D. 669 on the basis of narratives of monks who had survived the razzia; Amari, *STORIA* etc., p. 99. On the other hand, Caetani places the invasion in the 50th year. See *CHRONOGRAPHIA ISLAMICA*, p. 547. Becker, in *C.M.H.*, II, 380, supports A.D. 664 and argues that the Arab fleet sailed from Barca. Bertolini, *ROMA* etc., p. 365, gives the date for the invasion A.D. 673, a most highly improbable year.

93. Some sources mention Muawiyah Ibn Hudayg whom they call the governor of Egypt, while others say Uqbah Ben Nafi. This matter has been dealt with at great length in Vol. III, pp. 278-280. On the basis of Baladhuri, I believe the first governor of Africa was actually Uqbah.

say the year Anno Mundi 6116 (A.D. 668-669), in the first year of the reign of Constantine IV without, however, mentioning the name of the Arab conqueror.⁹⁴ Most Arab chroniclers say the 50th year of the Hegira, between January 670 and January 671.⁹⁵ And most contemporary historians accept this chronology.⁹⁶ The depredation and massacre was frightening. Uqbah launched the attack with 10,000 Moslem horsemen and several thousands of Berber converts to Islam. After taking Gafsa, he reached the environs of the ancient town of Kamunia. It is reputed that the marauders reached as far as Bizerta⁹⁷ but I find the report difficult to believe. In any case, the imperial forces neither opposed the invaders nor helped the Berbers against whom the operation was primarily directed.⁹⁸ In fact, the Byzantines withdrew to the security of the fortified towns which Uqbah dared not assault. Using much brutality the marauders forced many Berbers to convert to Islam. It is reputed that 80,000 prisoners were taken.⁹⁹ These figures appear to be exaggerated although Noweiri records that no one was spared the sword.

In the course of his return, Uqbah founded a new town by

94. Theophanes, p. 352; Cedrenus, p. 764; Michael the Syrian, II, 454; Chronicle of 1234, p. 224; Agapius, p. 231.

95. En-Noweiri, p. 116; Abd al-Hakam, p. 253; Abul Fedae, ANNALES, p. 108; Baladhuri, p. 358; TABARI, ed. Goeje, 1193f. Ibn Adhari dates this expedition in the 48th year (669). Al-Maliki says the 57th year (677), which is highly improbable. The latter writes that the leader of the expedition of 670 was Muawiyah Ibn Hudayg, and this using Abu l'Arabe, p. 50, as a source.

96. Bury, OP. CIT., II, 353; Wellhausen, DIE KÄMPFE usw., p. 427; Diehl, L'AFRIQUE etc., p. 572; Becker, in C.M.H., II, 368; Cheira, LA LUTTE etc., p. 128; Caudel, LES PREMIERES etc., p. 100; Julien, HISTOIRE etc., II, 16; Caetani, CHRONOGRAPHIA, p. 548; Lebeau, HISTOIRE etc., XI, 410. Some confuse the Byzantine and Arab chronologies and argue that two expeditions took place, one in 669 under Muawiyah Ibn Hudayg and a second in 670 led by Uqbah. But they are mistaken.

97. Al-Maliki, p. 335 who, however, reports as the leader Ibn Hudayg.

98. G. Marçais, LA BERBERIE MUSULMANE etc., p. 31; Diehl, OP. CIT., pp. 573, 574.

99. Theophanes, p. 352; Cedrenus, p. 764; Michael the Syrian, II, 454; Bar Hebraeus, ed. Wallis Budge, I, 101; CHRONICLE of 1234, p. 224.

name Kairouan¹⁰⁰ at a site in the region of Kamunia which he found most suitable. The building of Kairouan began at the close of A.D. 670 and took some five years to complete.¹⁰¹ Uqbah had two good reasons for founding the city in this province. It would serve as a convenient centre for future marauding attacks (razzias) or for outright conquest and as a refuge in the event of attacks against the Moslems by enemy forces, but more important still, it would become a strong base for the control of newly conquered territories. Similar military bases (Basra, Koufa, Misr) had been set up by the Arabs to guard their conquests and as starting off points for their military operations.

In the 50th year of the Hegira, the Caliph Muawiyah replaced the governor of Egypt and appointed Maslamah Ibn Mokaled, the Ansar,¹⁰² in his stead. On the instructions of the Caliph, Ifrikyia became a dependency of Egypt. Maslamah then replaced Uqbah by his freedman Abu-'l-Muhazir. Sources do not agree on the year in which this occurred.¹⁰³

The new military governor clashed with the Berbers. He defeated them near Tlemcen (Tilimsen) and under threat of massacre forced many to become Moslems, including their leading tribal chieftain Koseila.¹⁰⁴ Following his conversion, he lived on friendly terms with both the Berbers and the Byzantines.¹⁰⁵

Uqbah then appealed to the Caliph Muawiyah asking for the

100. The word signifies fortress, camp or city with a garrison. See Gateau, in his edition of *Al-Hakam*, p. 253; Yakubi, *LES PAYS*, pp. 208, 209, and fn. 1.

101. *Al-Hakam*, OP. CIT.: Ibn Adhari, p. 15; En-Noweiri, p. 117; Baladhuri, p. 358; *Al-Maliki*, pp. 135, 136, but citing later dates; Wellhausen, OP. CIT., 427; Diehl, OP. CIT., p. 573; Caudel, OP. CIT., p. 100; Bury, II, 353; Marçais, OP. CIT., p. 31.

102. The Ansars were the early supporters of Mohammed at Medina. Maslamah was therefore a "Companion" of the Prophet.

103. *Al-Hakam* supports the year 51 (A.D. 671), En-Noweiri and Ibn Adhari say the 55th (675), *Al-Maliki* the 57th (677). I would support the chronology of Noweiri and Adhari.

104. Koseila was the leader of the large group of tribes known as the Aoureba who dwelt in what is now the province of Constantine. Even following his conversion to Islam, Koseila continued to be a quasi-prisoner of the Arabs. See Mercier, *HISTOIRE DE L'AFRIQUE* etc., pp. 204, 205.

105. *Al-Maliki*, p. 136; Marçais, OP. CIT., p. 32; Julien, OP. CIT., II, 16.

restoration of his rights and protesting against the unjust dismissal, but it was not until the death of Muawiyah and the reign of his son the new Caliph Yazid that he was reinstated. Uqbah returned to Africa in the 62nd year of the Hegira (681-682).¹⁰⁶

In the meantime, many tribal leaders among the Berbers renewed their alliances either openly or secretly with the Byzantines. The mountain tribes of the Aures invited detachments of the imperial army to their fortified towns, and Koseila himself was in constant touch with the Byzantine officers. Once having imprisoned Abu-'l-Muhazir and settling the affairs of his district, Uqbah at the head of a strong force in A.D. 682-683 advanced into central North Africa. At Kairouan he left Zuhayr ben-Kais Al-Balawi as commander and penetrated deeper into Africa. Uqbah avoided the fortified Byzantine cities in the province of Proconsularia and the garrisoned towns of North Africa.

According to the Arab historians who describe the entire expedition in a highly imaginative fashion, the campaign took place within one year in the course of which Uqbah overcame the Berbers who were supported by the Byzantines.¹⁰⁷ Large battles took place, yet despite his victories, Uqbah was unable to take a single city. Moving through North Africa he proceeded as far as Septem (Ceuta, Sabtah) and Tangier. He had a friendly meeting with the Byzantine governor of Septem (Ceuta) Count Julian,¹⁰⁸ after which he marched farther West until finally reaching the Atlantic coast. In the course of this daring advance, he plundered a great part of Mauritania and took many of its towns. With much booty and many prisoners, he returned by

106. Abd-al-Hakam, p. 256; En-Noweiri, p. 121; Al-Maliki, p. 136; Kairouani, p. 44; Julien, *OP. CIT.*, p. 17; Caetani, *OP. CIT.*, p. 703; Wellhausen, *OP. CIT.*, p. 434; Müller, *DER ISLAM* usw., I, 353; Levi-Provençal in *E.I.*, old ed., entry Okba.

107. Ibn Khaldoun records that the resistance of the Berber tribes was fierce (*HISTOIRE DES BERBERES*, I, 212). Al-Maliki, pp. 136, 137, Kairouani, p. 44, En-Noweiri, p. 123, and Ubayd Allah, p. 38 (22) all state that the Berbers were supported by the Byzantines.

108. En-Noweiri, p. 124; Ubayd Allah, p. 38 (22).

way of central North Africa.

In the long absence of Uqbah, Koseila who had been abjectly humiliated by the Arab leader,¹⁰⁹ came to an understanding with the Byzantines. The latter assembled all their troops in Numidia while Koseila gathered a large force of Berbers. With their customary habit of exaggeration, the Arabs report the enemy troops as numbering 50,000 fighting men. With a section of his army, Uqbah advanced in the direction of the walled town of Techuda, an ancient Roman settlement. But there the combined forces of the Byzantines and Koseila joined battle with the Arabs in the course of which Uqbah was slain and his army nearly annihilated.¹¹⁰ Some escaped thanks to the speed of their horses and very few were taken prisoner.¹¹¹

Koseila then advanced into the Province of Byzacene with the intention of expelling the Arabs from Ifrikyā. When the Moslems had learned of the death of Uqbah and the destruction of his army, they were seized by panic and began to flee from the province. Zuhayr ben Kais had hoped to assemble all the scattered Arab forces and the Berber proselytes, but the Arabs did not respond to his call and began a general exodus from Kairouan.¹¹²

Faced with the unfavourable turn of events and the general panic that had swept the region, Zuhayr evacuated his remnants from the entire province of Byzacene and Tripolitania and retreated to Barca in Libya.¹¹³ Koseila entered Kairouan, according to Ibn Adhari and Al-Athir, in the 64th year (A.D. 683-684) and there established a kingdom quasi-subordinate to

109. Al-Maliki, p. 139; En-Noweiri, p. 128; Ibn Khaldoun, I, 211, 212.

110. Abd-al-Hakam, pp. 256, 257; En-Noweiri, p. 129; Al-Kaïrouani, pp. 48, 49; Al-Maliki, p. 139; Abu l'Arabe, p. 9; Ubayd Allah, p. 39 (23).

111. Ibn Khaldoun, OP. CIT., p. 288; Al-Kaïrouani, p. 49; Ubayd Allah, p. 39 (28).

112. En-Noweiri, p. 129; Al-Kaïrouani, p. 49. Ibn Adhari and Ubayd Allah report the same. Abd al-Hakam records the tradition that Zuhayr defeated the Berbers but was finally forced to evacuate the town.

113. Ancient Ptolemais, Barca was the foremost city of the Libyan Pentapolis and the base from which the Arabs launched their attacks against Tripolitania and Ifrikyā. See Vol. II, p. 114 and fn. 485. Müller, OP. CIT., I, 353.

Byzantium, or at least an ally of the Empire.¹¹⁴

These events have been related on the basis of Arab sources. It is very odd indeed that neither the Byzantine historians nor the Eastern and Latin sources make even the slightest reference to these happenings as though nothing had occurred in Africa, a large portion of which, in any case, had been lost to the Empire.

It is singularly unusual, apropos of these events, that no contemporary historian has pointed out an apparent disturbing discrepancy that emerges from the account. A treaty of peace had been made between Arabs and Byzantines in 678-679, about which more in the ensuing paragraph. This peace remained in force with various renewals until about 692-693, and was applied by Abu 'l-Muhazir. How, therefore, can the expedition of Uqbah possibly be justified? This could not have been a move made at his own initiative, since the Arab sources state explicitly that Uqbah was sent by the Caliph Yazid and that to him were assigned detachments from the Syrian and the Egyptian armies.¹¹⁵

Nor can it be argued that Uqbah attacked only the Berbers. Irrespective of whether the latter were subjects of the Byzantines, the entire region that was so mercilessly pillaged was a part of the Exarchate of Africa. On the other hand, all Arab sources record that Uqbah had fought against the Byzantines, the military detachments of whom were supported by the Berbers. Finally, the imperial army with its Berber allies defeated Uqbah and expelled the Arabs from Africa. For such an obvious violation of the terms of the peace treaty there is no record of a protest on the part of the Byzantines. On the other hand the Arabs who persistently appealed for the renewal of the treaty, on account of their internal dissensions, remained indifferent to the events in Ifrikyā. How can one answer this paradox? To argue that the records of these events is a product of Arab imagination is inadmissible. The details, the names of

114. Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 578, 579; Mercier, *OP. CIT.*, p. 208; Caudel, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 131, 132; Cheira, *OP. CIT.*, p. 131; Marçais, *OP. CIT.*, p. 32; Bury, II, 353; Julien, *OP. CIT.*, II, 18; Caetani, *OP. CIT.*, p. 737; Aigrain, *LA FIN DE L'AFRIQUE CHRETIENNE*, p. 227; Müller, *OP. CIT.*

115. Al-Maliki, p. 136; Abd-al-Hakam, p. 258.

the towns, the areas and the persons involved, the tribes that are recorded by Arab sources are so well defined that they cannot in their totality be a figment of the Arab imagination. Unless, of course, these events took place at some other date. But again, such a contention cannot be supported in any way. The chronology of Uqbah's death, the loss of such a great personality and soldier is precisely defined by all Arab sources. The very same kind of problem will arise in a subsequent period. Where can the answer lie? Admittedly, I cannot give any reasonable solution. The discrepancy is recorded here in the hope that others may some day resolve the dilemma.

3

As has been pointed out, and as Ahrweiler has said,¹¹⁶ there are few narratives more tedious than a recital of the continuous Arab incursions into Byzantine territory as presented by the Arab chroniclers. The entire account becomes even more tiresome with the confusion of dates most of which conflict with the Byzantine chronology or with the dates given by the Eastern Chroniclers. It was the period of preparation for the grand assault against Constantinople and therefore the period when the Arabs concentrated on exhausting the military resistance of the Byzantine Empire.

Theophanes¹¹⁷ relates that Fadalah ben Ubayd wintered in Cyzicus. Tabari also supports this information. On the other hand, Yakubi records that Busr was the Arab commander. At all events, it appears that the invasion was made by sea. And the question arises why the imperial fleet permitted the Arab ships to sail unhindered into the Hellespont and to winter so near Constantinople.

For the following year, A.M. 6163 (A.D. 671), the third of

116. Ahrweiler, *L'ASIE MINEURE ET LES INVASIONS ARABES*.

117. Theophanes, p. 353 for the year 6162 (A.D. 670) and the 2nd of Constantine; Cheira, *OP. CIT.*, p. 123; Tabari, II, 87; Brooks, *THE ARABS IN ASIA MINOR*, in the 50th year of the Hegira (A.D. 670).

Constantine's reign, and the 51st of the Hegira, Theophanes¹¹⁸ records that Busr Ben-Abu Artah went on a campaign, captured many prisoners, then returned, but no other source except Tabari reports that the area of Asia Minor was invaded by Busr.

In the meantime, the Arab fleet had been equipped for battle, and in 672 began operations. After Cilicia and Lycia were ravaged,¹¹⁹ a squadron of the armada led by Muhammed ben al-Rahman spent the winter at Smyrna¹²⁰ while another squadron commanded by Abdullah ben Kais wintered in Cilicia and Lycia.¹²¹ It is most probable that the coastal areas of these two provinces were plundered by the troops from this squadron.

Yet a third squadron of the fleet led by Gunada Ibn-Abu-Umaya seized Tarsus in Cilicia, then went on to conquer Rhodes, or took the latter island before capturing Tarsus. At all events, Gunada established a garrison in Rhodes to intercept Byzantine maritime communications. He moreover founded a colony of Arabs on the island who in the event of danger would take shelter in the garrison.¹²² Again I point out that the chronology of the historians is so confusing that it was only with the utmost difficulty that I could reach such conclusions.

In 674, the entire Arab fleet was concentrated in the Sea of Marmara. In 673, Fadalah and Abdullah plundered part of Crete in which island they spent the winter.¹²³ This operation

118. Theophanes, p. 353; Agapius, p. 231/491; Elie Bar Sinaya, p. 90; Tabari, II, 111; Baethgen, p. 115.

119. Could this possibly have been the expedition of Busr?

120. Ostrogorsky, p. 124, writes that they occupied Smyrna. But no source indicates as much.

121. Theophanes, p. 353; Cedrenus, p. 764; Agapius, p. 232; Elie Bar Sinaya, p. 90; Tabari, II, 157.

122. There is disagreement concerning the chronology of the conquest of Rhodes. Wellhausen contends that it took place in 672-673; Tabari, II, 157, says the 53rd year (A.D. 673), whereas Baladhuri supports the 54th year (674). The same date is maintained by Ibn al-Athir, III, 410-413; Brooks, C.M.H., II, 397; Cheira, OP. CIT., p. 136; Lewis, NAVAL POWER etc., p. 61.

123. Theophanes, p. 354, for the year 673-674; Baladhuri, The 52nd year (673), p. 376; Lombard, ARSENAUX etc.

had no further consequences for Crete since the two Arab leaders with their squadrons of ships soon thereafter departed from the island.¹²⁴

One may well ask what the purpose was of these operations on the part of the Arabs. It is my guess that the Arabs had hoped firstly to neutralize or destroy the anchorages and naval bases of the imperial fleet, and secondly to clear the way for the Egyptian squadron which had been ordered to sail to the Anatolian coast to reinforce the main Arab armada in its operations against Constantinople. Another important objective was to acquire timber supplies that were essential for the construction or repair of the naval vessels, since the Arabs did not possess the necessary forests for this. On the other hand, the densely wooded areas of Cyprus, of Crete, and especially the coastal regions of southern Asia Minor were a large source of timber. This accounts for the continuous and almost yearly forays to the islands and the Anatolian coasts.

To hinder the operations of the Egyptian fleet, the Byzantines in A.D. 673 appeared off the Delta of the Nile and landed troops at Al Burullus (Paralos).¹²⁵ The military governor of Egypt Maslamah Ibn Mokaied hastily dispatched a force to oppose the enemy and a great battle ensued in which many Arabs were slain among whom were some of the outstanding military leaders of Egypt. The extent of the casualties is verified by both Theophanes and Kindi.¹²⁶ Despite this apparent success,

124. J. Papadopoulos, *CRETE UNDER THE SARACENS*; Eickoff, Seekrieg usw., writes, on the basis of St. Andrew the Cretan (Migne, 97, 932), that the entire island was occupied. This is a complete fallacy, for the source speaks only of a marauding raid. In addition, Ostrogorsky and Ahrweiler, *OP. CIT.*, state that Chios also was occupied. The latter, in fact, cites the *Vita* of St. Pauli Juniores (An. Bol., XI, 892, pp. 5, 6) to support her contention, but the *Vita* refers to an attack of Cretan Saracens, an occurrence that took place several centuries later. Hence this information is also incorrect.

125. Yakubi places Paralos on the Nile near the sea, east of Alexandria, whereas Guest, in his edition of Kindi says 70 miles east of that city. Amelineau cannot identify a town of that name and believes that it refers to the coast near Alexandria. Paralos may be a corruption of the Greek word "Paralia" (coast).

126. Theophanes, p. 353, "and there were many deaths in Egypt"; Kindi, *THE GOVERNORS* etc., ed. Guest, p. 23; Makrizi, *DESCRIPTION* etc., ed. Casanova, p. 164; Brooks, *THE RELATIONS* etc.

the Byzantines failed in their objective, for the Egyptian fleet had already sailed to join the Arab armada.

A question arises as to the date of the occupation of Cyzicus. As pointed out earlier in the narrative, Theophanes and certain Arab chroniclers report that Fadalāh in 670 wintered in Cyzicus, but this involved only a *razzia*. It is to be expected that the seizure of that peninsula and the establishment of a camp there by the Arabs would have taken place when the entire Moslem armada appeared before Constantinople and was forced to occupy some area near enough the capital to serve as a base of operations or as a winter refuge. The question is further complicated by the fact that certain Arab chroniclers refer to the Cyzicus peninsula as Arvad (Aradus), whilst others identify Arvad with Rhodes.¹²⁷

4

The siege or blockade of Constantinople which supposedly lasted seven years presents many problems. I write siege or blockade since the nature of the attack has not been satisfactorily defined. It is certain that it did not last seven years as many sources record, and equally unconvincing is the contention supported by most contemporary historians that it endured for five years. The particulars at hand are unclear. The Arabs write very little about the event, and understandably so, since it ended so ingloriously with the humiliation of the Arab armada and army. I believe that the Byzantines also somewhat exaggerate the significance of their victory and refer only to the final triumph without describing the events which had in the meantime undoubtedly taken place. The most extensive narrative is that of Theophanes, but so numerous are the inaccuracies that it must be used with utmost caution.

Reinforced by another fleet (probably the Egyptian), the Arab armada under the command of the Emir Khaled, 'an able

127. Canard, *LES EXPEDITIONS DES ARABES* etc., pp. 78, 79.

and bold warrior',¹²⁸ in April 674¹²⁹ sailed through the Hellespont and appeared before the walls of Constantinople. There is some doubt regarding the commander of the force. Arab sources say that before the reinforcements arrived the leader was Abd-al-Rahman ben Al-Hakam or ben Masud.¹³⁰ Nicephorus maintains that Khaled was in command whereas Theophanes describes Khaled as the head of the flotilla that reinforced the initial Arab fleet. At all events, the Arab armada was powerful both in striking power and in numbers.¹³¹

The ships were moored 'on the Thracian side', that is, on the European shoreline of the Sea of Marmara at a point between the western extremity of the Hebdomon,¹³² the so-called Magnaura,¹³³ and the eastern head-land of the Hebdomon

128. Theophanes, p. 353; Nicephorus, p. 32 who calls him Khaled. But who precisely was Khaleh or Khaled? Reiske alters Khale the Emir to read Al-ançari. Wellhausen states (*DIE KÄMPFE DER ARABER* etc., p. 424, fn. 2) that in all probability he was the grandson of the great Khaled and son of Abd-al-Rahman ben Khaled. But I believe that Wellhausen also confuses the issue because of the existence of another Abd-al-Rahman who commanded the fleet.

129. Theophanes writes A.M. 6165 (673-674), the 5th of Constantine (673). Tabari, II, 163, says the 54th of the Hegira (674). With this latter date agree Ostrogorsky, Wellhausen, Brooks, Müller, Eickoff and others, whereas Bury, Caetani, Diehl, Bréhier, and Lebeau, among others support the year 673. It is my opinion that the correct chronology should be the Spring of A.D. 674.

130. Tabari, II, 157; Caetani, pp. 587 and 599; Baethgen, *FRAGMENTE* usw., supports the 54th year, Elie Bar Sinaya, p. 90 and Eliae, Bishop of Nisibeni, p. 70, write of Muhammed Ibn Al-Rahman.

131. Nicephorus, p. 32; Zonaras, III, 317; George the Monk p. 727; Leo the Grammarian, p. 159.

132. The Hebdomon was so called because the area was situated exactly seven miles from the 'Miliun' in the forum of Constantine from where began the measurements of distances along the roads. There were two palaces, the Castellum of the Theodosians, and the Jucundiana built by Justinian I, which were used as summer residences by the emperors. The Hebdomon occupied what is today the town of Bakir Kioy, formerly Makri Kioy. See Demangel, R., *L'HEBDOMON*, Paris, 1945. Also Janin, *CONSTANTINOPLE* etc., pp. 408-411; Vyzantios, *CONSTANTINOPLE, ATHENS*, 1951, I, 355 and 547; Stratos, I. p. 396.

133. Magnaura was the terminus and harbour of the palace, southwest of the landing stage for ships at Bakir Kioy. See Janin, *OP. CIT.*, p. 138.

known as the Cyclobium.¹³⁴

The imperial fleet had assembled in the 'port of Caesarium in the Proclianesium'.¹³⁵ Theophanes relates that when Constantine received intelligence of Arab intentions to attack the capital, he prepared biremes (ships with two banks of oars), cauldron carriers and dromons (swift vessels of about 100 tons displacement), as well as fire siphon carriers. This information would indicate that the Byzantines had constructed ships from which Greek fire could be discharged. Yet in the following paragraph, Theophanes himself states that the inventor of the frightening weapon had fled to Constantinople later, hence the information he provides is inaccurate. To meet the threat, the Byzantines feverishly built new ships and prepared the imperial fleet anchored in Constantinople for battle.

Throughout the period from April to September¹³⁶ daily naval skirmishes occurred from the Brachialium¹³⁷ of the

134. Cyclobium or the circular tower, a fortress on the coast at the eastern extremity of the Hebdomon, the modern site of Zeytin Burnu.

135. Ducange states that the harbour of Caesarium was probably built by a certain Caesarius, Eparch of the city, in the time of Theodosius I. At all events, the patridographoi (see Preger, S.O.C.) record nothing concerning this port. It appears for the first time in 553. It is curious that the Notitia which describes the city in the days of Theodosius I, does not mention Caesarium. The name appears only until the 7th Century, then vanishes. It should most probably be identified with the harbour of Theodosius and very likely a certain Proclianus in the 7th Century had repaired it or restored a part of the harbour, hence the name Proclianesium. The harbour of Caesarium was in the 12th district where the quarter of Caesarium and the port of Theodosius were situated, and therefore this identification appears reasonable. The modern site is at Yeni Kapi. Janin, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 220, 221; Guiland, *LES PORTS* etc., in *Byz. XXIII* (1953), pp. 213f.; Van Millingen, *BYZANTINE CONSTANTINOPLE*, pp. 302f.

136. Theophanes, pp. 353, 354; Cedrenus, p. 765; Nicephorus, p. 32; George the Monk, p. 727; Zonaras, III, 317.

137. Brachialium or Brachiolium was the name given by the Byzantines to that section between the land walls and the sea. There were two brachialia, the southern between the walls and the Propontis below the Golden Gate, and the northern at Blachernae in the deepest recess of the Golden Horn where the land walls terminated.

Golden Gate¹³⁸ to the Cyclobium 'advancing and withdrawing'. Beginning September the Arabs wintered in Cyzicus.¹³⁹

There exists some doubt concerning the date of the capture of Cyzicus. As has been already pointed out, Arab chroniclers confuse Rhodes and Cyzicus using the name 'Arvad'¹⁴⁰ sometime for the one and sometime for the other.

On the other hand, the Byzantine historians are very specific. They record that the Arabs 'withdrew' and occupied Cyzicus where they spent the Winter.¹⁴¹

Cyzicus was looted but did not suffer too much damage since it was used for years by the Arabs as a naval arsenal and base.¹⁴² The Eastern Chroniclers write much the same when they record that Abd al-Rahman with his forces wintered in Byzantine territory and launched an attack against Constantinople in the Summer.¹⁴³

Byzantine historians state that the siege lasted seven years. Since, however, the enemy withdrew in A.D. 677-678, these seven years do not tally unless they begin with the years A.D. 670-672 when the grand Arab attack with ultimate aim the capture of Constantinople began.^{143a} They also state clearly that the Arab fleet undertook yearly a close blockade of the capital and fought against the Byzantines, then spent the winter months at Cyzicus. The entire episode however gives rise to certain perplexing questions.

138. The Golden Gate was the southernmost entrance to the walls of Constantinople. It was probably built in A.D. 388-391 in the reign of Theodosius the Great. The modern site is Yedi Kule. See Stratos, *OP. CIT.*, I, p. 398.

139. Cyzicus, the name of both city and peninsula on the Asiatic side of the Sea of Marmara, was about half the distance between the Hellespont and Constantinople.

140. Canard, *LES EXPEDITIONS DES ARABES* etc., pp. 78, 79.

141. Theophanes, p. 354; Cedrenus, p. 765; Zonaras, III, 317; Leo the Grammarian, pp. 159, 160; Lambros, *OP. CIT.*, III, 738; Wellhausen, *OP. CIT.*, 424; Brooks, in *C.M.H.* II, 397; Lebeau, *OP. CIT.*, XI, 425.

142. Nicephorus, p. 32; George the Monk, p. 727; Caetani, *OP. CIT.*, 587.

143. Baethgen, *FRAGMENTE* usw., p. 116; Tabari, II, 163; Elie Bar Sinaya, p. 90.

143a. Ranke, *WELTGESCHICHTE*, V, 2, pp. 173f.

1. Can one reasonably accept the fact that the Arabs seriously believed they could capture Constantinople with their fleet alone? It is true that troops were carried on the ships, but would their number be sufficient, in the light of the losses suffered in numerous naval skirmishes and engagements, to take such a strongly fortified city containing half a million inhabitants? It follows that those who maintain that the Arabs attempted to take the city by assault with ships alone stand on very weak ground.¹⁴⁴

2. The fleet, and especially the ships of that period, very frequently had to replenish their supplies of food and especially drinking water. It would have been impossible to maintain a ship in uninterrupted naval service for six months. Hence every so often portions of the Arab fleet had to return to Cyzicus for fresh stores. Why did not the Byzantines take advantage of those movements when the enemy fleet had been weakened to attack and destroy it?

3. What sort of blockade could possibly be effective when all road communications were unhindered and the Bosphorus was open to the Byzantines for supplies and the free flow of goods, either through the Black Sea or Asia Minor? Moreover, in the winter months the sea lanes through the Hellespont were open since the European coastline of the Propontis was in the hands of the Byzantines.

4. Since the first grand assault failed, what could the Arabs accomplish with their fleet alone, and why did they not withdraw their ships to operate in more profitable operations elsewhere?

5. Why was not the entire imperial fleet concentrated in the Sea of Marmara but rather, as pointed out, had undertaken naval operations against Egypt and, as I will relate further in the narrative, had confined its actions to regular expeditions and raids against the south coast of Asia Minor and the Lebanon?

6. Why was the imperial navy centred in Constantinople and its environs inactive and why did it not attempt to recover Cyzicus?

144. Ostrogorsky, *OP. CIT.*, p. 124; Diehl, *LE MONDE ORIENTAL*, p. 241; Lemerle, *LES REPERCUSSIONS DE LA CRISE* etc., p. 177.

Such mystifying questions and others which I will not bring up lest the narrative become too burdensome, lead me to certain assumptions which I find somehow reasonable.

1. The Byzantines possessed a numerically inferior fleet and they dared not risk major battle even with a part of the vast Arab armada.

2. The situation was not actually as desperate as presented by the various chroniclers.

3. The Arabs had transported large military forces. The imperial army dared not attack immediately until receiving further reinforcements.

4. The lack of anxiety on the part of the Byzantines was probably an indication that they prepared something which would obtain for them a victory over the Arabs.

This siege or naval blockade (?) of the imperial capital is strange indeed, but even stranger still is the fact that the Arab chroniclers make only the slightest reference to the event. Most of our information comes from Byzantine and Eastern sources.

At the beginning of the siege or in the course of this, there took refuge in Constantinople a certain architect¹⁴⁵ or engineer¹⁴⁶ or carpenter,¹⁴⁷ by name Callinicus from Heliopolis (Baalbek) in Syria. As the chroniclers record, he was the inventor of 'sea fire' or 'liquid fire'. He delivered his invention to the Byzantines who worked diligently to perfect the new weapon. The 'liquid' or 'sea' or 'Greek fire' was to remain the exclusive secret weapon of the Byzantines for several centuries and enabled them to become masters of the sea.

Constantine Porphyrogennetus¹⁴⁸ relates that the secret of the incendiary composition was not to be given to any other nation, even to those that requested it, and it appears that many

145. Theophanes, p. 354; Cedrenus, p. 765; Zonaras, III, 317, who clearly states that he went to Constantinople during the siege; Leo the Grammarian, p. 160.

146. Agapius, p. 232.

147. Michael the Syrian, II, 455; Bar Hebraeus, *CHRONICUM SYRIACUM*, p. 115.

148. Constantine Porphyrogennetus, *DE ADM. IMP.*, Chapt. 13, 72f, and Chapt. 48.

had, the excuse being that it was sent from God by an angel to the great and Christian emperor. There has survived a Latin translation of a minor treatise by one Marcus Graecus,¹⁴⁹ that is, Marcus the Greek, titled 'Liber ignium ad Comburrendos Hostes', edited by F. Holer. The Arabs refer to Marcus as Macouneh. The original Greek text had been translated into Arabic from which the Latin version was made. The text is dated in the late 12th or early 13th Century. The basic element in Greek fire was naphtha, and 'liquid fire' is nothing more than the Greek translation for naphtha, the Persian word for petroleum (na - meaning oil, and ftha - fire).¹⁵⁰ The existence and the properties of petroleum were known in antiquity, and the liquid was called 'oil of Medea'¹⁵¹ since the best known naphtha wells were situated in Medea (Persia). Marcus the Greek records that naphtha was used by Alexander the Great to set afire the fortress of Tyre. On the other hand, Arrian (II, 19) writes that naphtha was used by the Phoenicians when Tyre was besieged by Alexander. According to Berthelot it was prepared in the following manner. A quantity of pure sulphur was mixed with argol or tartar, gum, saltpetre, and petroleum. This mixture was boiled well, then objects that were combustible were immersed therein, then ignited. It was impossible to quench the flame with water. A quantity of alcohol may also have been added.¹⁵²

It is possible that Callinicus had learned the formula for gunpowder from the Chinese who were acquainted with the element for many centuries already,¹⁵³ and he may have developed the preparation of Greek fire from this knowledge.

Not only was the composition of liquid fire a highly guarded secret, but the manner of its propulsion from the tubes was also

149. Berthelot, *LA CHIMIE AU MOYEN AGE*, I, 89-94; and *INTRODUCTION A LA CHIMIE DES ANCIENS*; Zengelis, *LE FEU GREGEOIS* etc.; Partington, *A HISTORY* etc.

150. Stephanides, M., *LE FEU GREGEOIS* etc.

151. See Suidas, the entry 'Naphtha', Vol. III, 442; Procopius, *Wars*, II, 512; Photius, *BIBLIOTHECA* in Migne, P.G., Vol. 103, 223.

152. Berthelot. *OP. CIT.*, pp. 117-128.

153. Lalanne, *RECHERCHES SUR LE FEU GREGEOIS*, p. 73; Mercier, *LE FEU GREGEOIS*, p. 25.

well guarded.¹⁵⁴ The flame which was discharged was used mainly as a tactical weapon. Leo the Sage¹⁵⁵ writes that tubes or siphons 'dressed in bronze' were added to the bows of the ship from which the 'preparation' or liquid fire was discharged against the enemy. Also carried were pots or cauldrons full of Greek fire which were used as a kind of hand grenade. The dromons were usually vessels of 100 tons with a complement of 130 men of whom 100 were oarsmen. Larger dromons also existed. In the centre of the ship were the wooden towers from which the troops came to close quarters with the enemy; in the bows were the mobile tubes that projected through the mouth of a carved lion's head or other beast made of bronze.¹⁵⁶

Greek fire not only burned the wooden components of the ship but also melted the pitch with which these parts were joined, thus literally dissolving the vessel, as depicted in old prayer books and lives of saints.¹⁵⁷

The discharge of the flame was accompanied by a deafening roar and much smoke. The immense quantities of smoke and the detonations easily shattered the morale of the enemy.¹⁵⁸

Callinicus was aided in his escape from Syria by the governor of Attaleia. In Constantinople this important formula was brilliantly exploited, especially in the manner in which it was applied. When the details were finally worked out, all imperial ships were fitted with the new weapon in the harbour of the Sophion¹⁵⁹ in preparation for the battle with the Arabs.¹⁶⁰

154. Zengelís, *OP. CIT.*

155. Leo the Wise, *TACTICA*, in Migne, P.G., Vol. CVII, pp. 992f.

156. Bréhier, *LA MARINE DE BYZANCE*.

157. Tomadakis, *A SMALL MT. ATHOS*, etc.; Karlen-Hayter, *UNE ALLUSION AU FEU GRECOIS DANS LE SYNAXAIRE*.

158. Leo the Wise, *OP. CIT.*, p. 1008; Zengelís, *OP. CIT.*; Haussig, *HISTOIRE DE LA CIVILISATION*, etc., pp. 221, 222.

159. On the Propontis, the modern port of Kantirga. Julian began its construction in A.D. 362. In the reign of Justin II, the eunuch Narses completely rebuilt it and it was then known as the harbour of Sophia or the Sophion in honour of Sophia, wife of Justin. Preger, *S.O.C.*, p. 184; Vyzantios, *CONSTANTINOPLE*, I, 268; Janin, *CONSTANTINOPLE BYZANTINE*, 223, 224; Guillard, *OP. CIT.*

160. Kulakovsky, III, 237; Bréhier, *LES INSTITUTIONS* etc., p. 414; Amantos, *HISTORY*, I, 329; Lambros, III, 741.

The chronology of the Byzantine counter-attack, the victory over the Arabs and the destruction of the Moslem armada presents a few minor difficulties that are easily resolved. Unfortunately, the Arab historians are of little help in the matter since they record nothing of the naval engagement or of the destruction they suffered. It is certain that in the course of the siege, the Arabs continued to receive reinforcements to replenish their losses which were considerable.

It was probably not until the Summer of 677 that the Byzantines were prepared to launch a counter-attack.¹⁶¹ In addition to being completely surprised by the new and frightening weapon which was used for the first time in battle,¹⁶² the Arabs suffered many casualties.

After reprovisioning their ships, the imperial fleet arrived in the gulf of Cyzicus where a further naval engagement occurred in which the Arabs again suffered great loss¹⁶³ both in ships and especially fighting men.¹⁶⁴ It appears that the latter attack took place in the Autumn of A.D. 677.¹⁶⁵ In the meantime, the imperial army was being readied for an offensive against the Arab forces in Cyzicus. I presume that the Arabs took advantage of the lull in battle when the Byzantines sailed off for new provisions, and embarked as many troops as they could on the remaining ships, then set sail for Syria. Towards the end of November or in early December,¹⁶⁶ in the sea off Sylaium or

161. Bréhier, *VIE ET MORT DE BYZANCE*, p. 64.

162. Lambros, *HISTORY*, III, 740; Nomicos, *INTRODUCTION* etc., p. 176.

163. Cedrenus, p. 765; Constantine Porphyrogenetus, *DE ADM. IMP.*, Chapt. 48; Bréhier, *OP. CIT.*, p. 64.

164. Theophanes, p. 354; George the Monk, pp. 727, 728; Nicephorus, p. 32; Zonaras, III, 317; Agapius, p. 232; Michael the Syrian, II, 455; Bar Hebraeus, *CHR. SYRIACUM*, p. 115; Kornemann, *WELTGESCHICHTE* usw., II, 485.

165. Caetani, *CHRONOGRAPHIA*, p. 627 for the 57th year (A.D. 677). Kornemann supports the year 678.

166. The invitation in 678 asking Pope Donus to send legates to Constantinople indicates that the Arabs had abandoned the siege before the close of 677. See Mansi, XI, 196f.; Brooks, in *C.M.H.*, II, p. 397 and fn.1.

Sillyum¹⁶⁷ the remnants of the Arab armada encountered a terrible storm, or in the words of Theophanes, 'were caught by a wintry gale' and many ships were lost with all hands. Yet this was not the end of their trials, for a squadron of the imperial fleet, that of the Cibyrraeots,¹⁶⁸ fell upon those ships that had survived the storm and succeeded in destroying all units except, as George the Monk records, four ships which were the only to escape.¹⁶⁹

The Arab army also took part in the siege or attack against Constantinople. But, as has been stated, the Arab sources are mostly silent on the matter whereas the Byzantine chroniclers dwell especially on their great naval victory and say little about military operations. As pointed out, it is unthinkable that the Arab soldiers did not participate in the assault on Constantinople. An army was required to insure the occupation of the peninsula of Cyzicus which served as the headquarters for the entire operation. Moreover, it would have been impossible for a large city of 500,000 inhabitants to be taken by a fleet alone. There is some information on the participation of the army in the expedition. Leo the Grammarian says that 'there came out a large fleet and numerous Arab troops'.¹⁷⁰ Arab and Eastern sources inform us that Yazid, son of Muawiyah, took part in the siege.¹⁷¹ He had been sent to reinforce the Arab army.

167. A city in the interior, centre of the Bishopric of the province of Pamphilia, the modern Asarkoy. See Ramsay, p. 420; Honigmann, *THE SYNECDEMUS OF HIEROCLES*, 679, 3. Sillyon was besieged in 665-666 by Abd-al-Rahman ibn Khaled. See Stratos, III, p. 234.

168. Town of Pamphylia. The naval theme of the Cibyrraeotes with capital at Attaleia was established in the 8th Century.

169. Theophanes, p. 354; Cedrenus, p. 764; George the Monk, p. 728; Zonaras, III, 318; Nicephorus, p. 32; Leo the Grammarian, p. 160; Ostrogorsky, *OP. CIT.*, p. 124; Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, p. 241; Brooks, *OP. CIT.*, II, 397; Bury, *OP. CIT.*, II, 310; Lambros, *OP. CIT.*, III, 740; Wellhausen, *OP. CIT.*, p. 425; Amantos, I, 329; Weil, *GESCHICHTE DER CHALIFEN*, I, 292, 293.

170. Leo the Grammarian, p. 159.

171. Al Yakubi, ed. Houtsma, II, 258, the 56th or 57th year of the Hegira (676 or 677); Huwarazmi in Baethgen, p. 116, the 57th (677); Eliae Nisibeni, ed. Brooks, p. 69, records the same year. On the other hand, Bar Hebraeus says

Following the catastrophic defeat of the Arabs, especially at Cyzicus, those troops that could not embark on the remnants of the armada began to retreat under the leadership of Sufyan ibn Aouf, across Asia Minor in an effort to reach Syria. The Byzantine army fell upon them in hot pursuit and was able to force the withdrawing army to give battle. The Arabs were crushed, losing more than 30,000 dead in the engagement.¹⁷² The commanders of the imperial forces were, according to the Byzantine chroniclers, the generals Florus, Petronas and Cyprianus.

Thus ended ignominiously the grandiose plan of Muawiyah to conquer Constantinople, the nerve-centre and heart of the Empire.

5

There is a very curious chain of events that is treated in one way by the Byzantine and Eastern chroniclers, and in an entirely different manner by the Arabs. I greatly fear that these events have been chronologically confounded, and identical episodes are recorded as unrelated occurrences.

the 52nd year (A.D. 672). See Paparrigopoulos, III, 242; Bury, *OP. CIT.*, II, 311; Finlay, *OP. CIT.*, I, 383, who maintains that Abu Eyub died then; Lebeau-St. Martin, XI, 424; Brooks, *THE ARABS IN ASIA MINOR*, p. 188; Nomikos, *OP. CIT.*, p. 177. It is curious that the death of Abu Ayub or Eyub, companion of the Prophet, is dated variously in the 50th, 51st or 52nd or 55th year of the Hegira (674). See Stratos, III, p. 241 and fn. 877.

172. Theophanes, p. 354; Cedrenus, p. 765; Zonaras, III, 318. These three speak of a battle after the destruction of the armada. On the other hand, Michael the Syrian, II, 455, Agapius, p. 232/492, Bar Hebraeus, p. 115, speak rather confusedly of a battle, a naval engagement and the destruction of the fleet by a storm. See also Ostrogorsky, *OP. CIT.*, p. 124; Caetani, *OP. CIT.*, p. 627; Paparrigopoulos, III, 242; Lambros, III, 741; Bury, II, 321, who maintains that Abd al-Rahman was killed at Cyzicus and was succeeded by Sufyan ibn Aouf; Lebeau-St. Martin, XI, 427; Nomikos, *OP. CIT.*, p. 178. It should be noted that Nomikos argues that the Arabs were destroyed not only by Greek fire but by the smallpox or the plague. As the Arab chroniclers report, Yazid had suffered an attack of smallpox. See Lammens, *MOAWYIA Ier.*

Theophanes¹⁷³ states that in A.M. 6169 (A.D. 677) the Mardaites invaded the Lebanon, occupied the region between the Black Mountain (the Amanus mountain, or as Baladhuri says, Al-Lukam)¹⁷⁴ and the holy city of Jerusalem, and established control of the mountains of Lebanon. Many slaves, captives and native Christians flocked to join them and soon swelled the number to many thousands. Muawiyah then became deeply concerned and sent ambassadors to the Byzantines to sue for peace. Other Byzantine chroniclers record something similar.¹⁷⁵ On the other hand, Michael the Syrian¹⁷⁶ writes that in the 9th year of Constantine's reign (A.D. 676-677), the Romans went to the mountains of Lebanon. These people were known as Maridaye or Liphoure. The inhabitants of Syria called them 'Gargoumaye' or the impudent or shameless ones. They occupied the lands stretching from the mountains of Galilee (Palestine) to the Black Mountain. They would come down from their fastnesses to plunder and pillage. Bar Hebraeus¹⁷⁷ records likewise, but adds that these people were sent by Constantine and that the Arabs suffered much from their raids. Agapius¹⁷⁸ says something similar to Theophanes for the 17th year of Muawiyah's Caliphate (677-678), but adds that the Greeks came by ship along the coasts of Tyre and Sidon (cities of the Lebanon), then occupied Mount Lebanon and encamped there. Moreover, they were deliberately sent by Constantine to force the Arabs to halt the invasions of Byzantine territory.

The disembarkation of the Byzantines, according to Caetani,¹⁷⁹ took place in the 57th year of the Hegira (A.D. 677).

173. Theophanes, p. 355, says A.M. 6169 (A.D. 677) which Brooks amends to 6170 (678), the 9th year of Constantine's reign (676-677), the 22nd of Muawiyah (677-678), the 2nd of the Patriarch Theodore (678-679).

174. Baladhuri, ed. De Goeje, p. 159.

175. Cedrenus, pp. 764, 765; Zonaras, III, 321; Leo the Grammarian, p. 160. Nicephorus does not mention the incident.

176. Michael the Syrian, II, 455.

177. Bar Hebraeus, ed. Wallis Budge, p. 101, and ed. Bruns-Kirsch.

178. Agapius, pp. 232, 233/492-493. The Chronicle of 1234 records the same, but adds the 9th year of Constantine (676-677) and that they looted the country badly.

179. Caetani, CHRONOGRAPHIA, p. 627.

Many questions arise from these narratives and passages, problems which unfortunately contemporary historians have not easily resolved.

1. Who were these Mardaites? 2. What kind of role did the Byzantines play in the episode? 3. When precisely did these events occur? Theophanes repeats the same events for both the years A.M. 6176 (684-685)¹⁸⁰ and A.M. 6178 (686-687). And 4. What final results came of this episode?

1. There exist various opinions concerning the identity of the Mardaites. Al-Baladhuri, who wrote in the 9th Century, records that the Al-Jarajimah or Djaradjimah inhabited a town lying between Bayas¹⁸¹ and Buka.¹⁸² When they came to the assistance of the residents of Antioch who had in A.D. 638 rebelled against the Arabs,¹⁸³ Abu Ubayda, the leader of the Arabs at the time, sent Habib ibn Maslamah against them. But Habib met no resistance and came to an agreement with these people by which they were to serve as agents and spies of the Moslems and were to guard the passes of the mountain Amanus.¹⁸⁴ In many instances they kept their word, but in others they helped the Byzantines. They lived usually from the proceeds of war and the razzia. They had the right to share the loot whenever participating in raids with the Arabs. The latter had exempted them from the head tax and used them as spies, informants, and sentries for the mountain passes. These people were most probably lukewarm Christians, but whether Monophysites or Monothelites is unknown.¹⁸⁵ Such is the information provided by

180. Theophanes, p. 361, where he says the 16th of Constantine (684-685) and the first of Abd al-Malik (685).

181. An area north of Alexandretta extending as far as the foothills of the Amanus.

182. A region no longer existing. It lay in north Syria, northeast of Antioch and reached as far as the foothills of the Taurus. It bordered on Djaradjima. It was well fortified and was in A.D. 949-950 occupied by the general Leo Phocas. See the entry in E.I., new ed.

183. See Vol. II of this History.

184. Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, pp. 246, 247.

185. Lammens, LES MARDAITES in E.I., old ed., Vol. III (1928), pp. 288, 289, and his ETUDES... Moawiya Ier; Canard, Djaradjima, in E.I., new ed., Vol. II (1965), pp. 468, 469; Caetani, ANNALI, Vol. III, pp. 960f.

the Arab chroniclers Al-Baladhuri, Maçoudi, Tabari, Ibn al-Athir and others.

The Greeks on the other hand describe them as inhabitants of the Amanus mountains, that their name derives from the Persian word 'Merd' meaning a brave man, or from the Arabic 'mardat' a synonym for partisan or rebel. Eventually, it acquired the meaning of the crafty, brave, enemy lying in ambush.¹⁸⁶ It is certain that all the Mardaites did not reside in the area of Amanus but had intermingled with independent Byzantine commandos and with raider groups in the Taurus region.¹⁸⁷

They were known to the Syrians¹⁸⁸ as the Maridaye or Liphoure. The Aramaic meaning of the word 'Maridaye' is the rebellious one, whereas 'Liphouré' derives from the Greek signifying loot and conveys the meaning of bandit.

Assemani¹⁸⁹ wrongly identifies the Mardaites with the Maronites who were Monothelites of the Lebanon.

The matter becomes even more involved when Nicephorus¹⁹⁰ describes them as 'armed men lying in ambush in the mountain of Lebanon', whereas Theophanes¹⁹¹ writes those 'who habitually hid as Mardaites'. These passages would indicate that this was no national movement but the name given to guerrilla groups, and the word gradually came to be associated with the bravery of the border guardians and the manner in which they fought.

2. The role of the Byzantines also raises questions. Their chroniclers supply no information on the subject. The Syrians, as already pointed out, relate that Constantine had sent the

186. Paparrigopoulos, III, 246; Amantos, HISTORY, I, 330, and THE MARDAITES; Sathas, Bibliotheca Medii-Aevi, II, pp. 45f., and his DOCUMENTS INEDITS, etc., Vol. IV, pp. LXIVf.

187. Bury, OP. CIT., II, 312.

188. Michael the Syrian, II, 455; Wellhausen, OP. CIT., p. 429; Lewis, in Vol. II of DE ADM. IMP of Constantine Porphyrogenetus, p. 75.

189. Assemani BIBL. ORIENTALIS, I, 502f, who in his notes states that they were Maronites, but because they rebelled they were known as Mardaites; Matti Mosa, THE RELATION etc.; Paparrigopoulos, OP. CIT., III, 248.

190. Nicephorus, p. 36.

191. Theophanes, p. 397.

Mardaïtes and there followed a landing of imperial troops on the coast of the Lebanon to support the guerrilla factions that had already invaded and occupied portions of the Lebanon mountain.^{191a} The Arabs ignore this particular episode and mention it only later, with reference to the time of Abd al Malik (685-705) for which reason Wellhausen finds the information furnished by Theophanes suspect.¹⁹²

Many contemporary historians assert that Constantine IV succeeded in procuring the support of the so-called Mardaïtes, or those mountain dwellers of Amanus, who under the leadership of Byzantine officers¹⁹³ undertook the invasion of the mountainous areas of Syria. Also that imperial detachments later reinforced the Mardaïtes who eventually caused great destruction and struck grievous blows against the Arabs.¹⁹⁴

3. Very controversial is the chronology of these events. As already stated, the Byzantine and Eastern historians date the episode in A.D. 676-678. The Arabs contend that it occurred during the Caliphate of Abd al-Malik (685-705).¹⁹⁵ At all events, the Greeks and Easterners explicitly state that it took place in the reign of Constantine IV.

Regarding this matter, I should like to point out the

191a. Lammens, *OP. CIT.*, who writes that they were helped by the Byzantine cavalry. Müller, I, 351, maintains that a Greek army was landed in Syria and occupied the heights of the Lebanon.

192. Wellhausen, *OP. CIT.*, p. 430. He argues that Theophanes confused this with the treaty made later by Abd al-Malik.

193. Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, p. 241; Sathas, *Bibliotheca Medii Aevi*, II, p. 51; Amantos, *THE MARDAITES*; Lammens, the entry Mardaïtes in *E.I.*, old ed. and Muawiyah, Vol. I. Lammens contends that the invasion occurred in 666. This is an obvious error. Muawiyah at the time was all-powerful and the Moslem fleet had not yet suffered its defeat. I presume that Lammens meant the year 676, but this too must be considered mistaken. Unfortunately, Canard, in *E.I.*, new ed., II, falls into the same error relying, as he writes, on Lammens.

194. Caetani, *CHRONOGRAPHIA*, pp. 627, 628; Paparrigopoulos, *OP. Cit.*, III, 245f; Amantos, *HISTORY*, I, 330; Bury, *OP. CIT.*, II, 312f.; Weil, *GESCHICHTE* usw., I, 294. Also all those cited in the preceding footnote.

195. In another study, Lammens, *LA SYRIE*, II, 81, dates the invasion in the reign of Abd al-Malik and Justinian II, repeating what he had previously written.

following: a) To undertake an operation of this magnitude would require much previous preparation. Such operations cannot be of a makeshift nature. Since this operation was ostensibly a diversionary attack to delay the major Arab assault against Constantinople, no Byzantine troops or ships could possibly be spared for the purpose. b) If in fact the operation did take place, then it must have occurred either in A.D. 677 or 678 when the Arab armada had been practically destroyed (it is reported that only four ships survived) and the army had been annihilated as pointed out in the previous paragraph. It was not easy for Muawiyah to reassemble quickly a new army from the scattered provinces of his vast Empire in order to strike at and destroy a substantial number of bands that had established themselves in the Lebanese heights and had been reinforced by many escaped captives and slaves. c) In the treaty of peace that was drawn up between Byzantium and the Arab Empire, indeed with the most humiliating terms for the latter, absolutely no mention is made of the Mardaites. If in fact this invasion and the ensuing danger that threatened the Arabs¹⁹⁶ was, if not the only reason, but one of the major reasons forcing the Arabs to sue for peace, would it not be reasonable to assume that the latter would request the withdrawal of the Mardaites who, in view of the peace treaty, would have had no further reason for remaining in the Lebanon? And yet not a single reference is made concerning the evacuation of Syria. Moreover the sources make mention of the invasion and of the withdrawal of the Mardaites only few years later in the peace treaty between Justinian II and Abd al-Malik. It should be noted that the peace treaty with Muawiyah was confirmed in the time of Yazid who evacuated Rhodes without asking for a similar withdrawal from Syria in exchange.

Such are the complexities of this episode to which there is no easy answer. d) If in fact the invasion took place, it would have been one of the major contributing factors leading to the peace

196. Caetani, *CHRONOGRAPHIA*, p. 628.

treaty between Byzantines and Arabs. The Greek chroniclers¹⁹⁷ and certain Eastern historians support such a contention. The Arab writers are silent. On the other hand, Nicephorus¹⁹⁸ states that Muawiyah decided to sue for peace only after he learned of the destruction of his fleet and the defeat of his army. He makes no reference to the Mardaïtes. If the operation did take place, then certainly it was a serious enough reason to force the Arabs to ask for a cessation of hostilities.¹⁹⁹ Yet, all the other questions that have been posed must remain unanswered.

6

There exist several serious gaps in the details of the peace treaty and the renewals of this. Unfortunately again no historians have dealt with the subject. Satisfactory answers to the questions are difficult to arrive at.

Theophanes reports that Muawiyah and his counsellors had become alarmed by the invasion of the Mardaïtes and sent embassies to Constantine with offers of peace and with promises of an annual tribute payment.²⁰⁰ Nicephorus and Zonaras report that Muawiyah had sought peace after the destruction of his fleet and army. Zonaras in fact adds that the Arab leader feared a Byzantine invasion of Syria.²⁰¹ The Emperor cordially received the Arab emissaries headed by one Phenakis, of Greek origin, who had conducted the peace talks between Constantine III and Muawiyah in 659²⁰² when the latter waged his campaign against Ali. The Emperor then sent as his emissary the patrician John, the so-called Pitsigavdis, a highly respected statesman of much

197. Theophanes, p. 355; Cedrenus, p. 765; Agapius, p. 233/453; Zonaras, III, 321.

198. Nicephorus, p. 32.

199. Lammens, *LES MARDAÏTES*, in *E.I.*, old ed.; Canard, *Djaradjima*, in *E.I.*, new ed.

200. Theophanes, p. 355. With this statement agree Cedrenus, p. 766, but without the 'promised tribute payment', and Leo the Grammarian, p. 160.

201. Nicephorus, p. 32; Zonaras, III, 318.

202. Maçoudi, II, 335; Canard, *LES RELATIONS POLITIQUES* etc.

experience and wisdom²⁰³ to conduct the negotiations for the terms of the treaty. It is very strange indeed that Michael the Syrian, among other Syrian chroniclers, makes no mention of this treaty.²⁰⁴

John arrived in Syria with his fellow ambassadors where he was received with great honours by Muawiyah and many 'ameers and korasenes'.²⁰⁵ Following negotiations, a thirty-year truce was drawn up in writing and formalized by oaths. The Arabs were to make an annual payment of 3,000 pounds of gold (some 220,000 gold bezants or nomismata), fifty hostages, and fifty horses of fine breed.²⁰⁶ John returned to Constantinople laden with gifts.

This version is accepted by most contemporary historians, but there is disagreement concerning the actual date of the treaty, for some support the year 677, others 678, and yet others 678-679. Moreover, there is no unanimity of opinion regarding the reason for the peace, whether it was the direct outcome of the annihilation of the Arab fleet and army, or whether it was due to the attack by the Mardaites. Historians support either one or the other contention.²⁰⁷

203. Nicephorus, pp. 32-33, who says 'much experienced and distinguished in wisdom'; Zonaras, 'a prudent man and a brilliant speaker'.

204. Michael the Syrian, II, 469, records that the treaty was made between Justinian II and Abd al-Malik. Caetani mistakenly cites Michael, p. 455, where nothing is mentioned regarding this.

205. I presume he means 'Quraysh', the great Arab tribe that dominated Mecca for centuries and whose leader was Abu Sufyan, father of Muawiyah. It was from this tribe that Mohammed and all the succeeding Caliphs descended.

206. Theophanes, p. 355; Cedrenus, p. 766, but who says 10,000 pounds of gold; Zonaras, III, 318, speaks of eight steeds and eight hostages; Nicephorus, p. 33; Leo the Grammarian, who mentions 10,000 bezants and 8,000 (!) hostages etc.; Andrea Dandolo, *CHRONICON*, p. 101.

207. Certain historians only are cited. Ostrogorsky, p. 124, after A.D. 678; Bury, II, 310, not before 678; Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, p. 241, A.D. 678; Amantos, *OP. CIT.*, I, 330, A.D. 678 or 679; Cheira, *OP. CIT.*, p. 130, A.D. 680; Caetani, *CHRONOGRAPHIA*, p. 628, the 57th year of the Hegira (677); Levi della Vida, in *E.I.*, old ed., Vol. IV, p. 1054, the 57th year (677) because of the Mardaites; Dölger, *REGESTEN*, No. 239, A.D. 678; Wellhausen, *OP. CIT.*, p. 425, on the basis of Theophanes. It should be noted that Theophanes places the treaty agreement A.M. 6169 (A.D. 677-678), in the 9th year of

As pointed out in the preceding paragraph, the affair of the Mardaïtes gives rise to many contradictions since one would expect that some reference would have been made to these peoples in the provisions of the peace treaty, if indeed the treaty was a result of their activities. In fact, the Arabs did not ask for their withdrawal.

The treaty was endorsed in 680 or 681 by Yazid who succeeded his father Muawiyah upon the latter's death in the 60th year of the Hegira (A.D. 680), about which more in another chapter. Yazid ordered the immediate withdrawal of the garrison of Rhodes and of the Arab colony established on the island by Gunadah.²⁰⁸ Also, according to Baladhuri himself, Yazid ordered the evacuation of the 12,000 troops garrisoned in Cyprus who had been first established there by Muawiyah in the 33rd year of the Hegira (653-654).²⁰⁹

Whether the treaty with Muawiyah was faithfully observed or whether it was violated will be dealt with in a following paragraph. At all events, Theophanes appears to provide the answer to this. For the year 6176 (A.D. 684-685),²¹⁰ he records

Constantine's reign (676-677), the 22nd of Muawiyah (678) and the 2nd year of the Patriarch Theodore (678-679).

208. Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, pp. 376, 377. Tabari, II, 196, obviously confuses the chronology of the conquest of Rhodes and the abandonment of the island.

209. Baladhuri, *OP. CIT.*; Hill, *A HISTORY OF CYPRUS*, I, 286; Dikigoropoulos, *A CONTRIBUTION* etc., who, however, doubts that a garrison was on Cyprus at that time; Lammens, *LE CALIFAT DE YAZID Ier*, V, 2.

210. Theophanes, p. 361, for the 16th year of Constantine (684), the 1st of Abimilech (Abd al-Malik) (April 685-686), the 3rd year of the Patriarch Theodore. The latter was deposed in November-December 679 and restored in January-February of 686. Agapius, *OP. CIT.*, p. 237/497; Denys de Tell-Mahre, p. 10; Eliae Bar Sinaya, *OP. CIT.*, p. 92, July of 685; Chronicle of 1234, p. 227; Khuwarazmi in Baethgen, July of the 65th year (685). Also the Syrian Chronicle of the year 846 (Brooks in *Z.D.M.G.*, p. 58) writes that in the year 996 (A.D. 685), Abd al-Malik made a three-year treaty with the Romans. Baladhuri, ed. Goeje, p. 188. It is very curious indeed that for the year 6178 Theophanes records precisely the same about the treaty drawn up between Justinian II and Abd al-Malik. Cedrenus, p. 771 and Michael the Syrian, II, 469, record only the latter treaty. See also Yakubi, II, 321; Welhausen, *OP. CIT.*, p. 428.

that a terrible famine and plague struck Syria. And because the Mardaïtes were on the offensive in the Lebanon, 'Abimilech' (Abd al Malik ibn al-Marwan, the new Caliph 685-705) requested a 'renewal' of the peace treaty drawn up by Muawiyah. He sent an embassy to the Emperor offering 1,000 gold bezants for each day of the year and 365 hostages as well as 365 steeds of the finest stock.

One can draw certain conclusions from this passage of Theophanes. The Mardaïtes had not withdrawn from the Lebanon. On the contrary they continued their aggressive activities. The peace treaty was renewed in the same year as the great famine of Syria. The chronology of the famine is defined by Syrian and Arab sources who say the 65th year of the Hegira (685). The request for a renewal of the treaty would indicate that it had been violated. But there arises some confusion here, for while Theophanes writes that an identical peace with that of Muawiyah was sought, the amount of the 'pacta' or tribute to be paid in the new agreement is the figure which was agreed to in the subsequent treaty with Justinian II. In this instance, Theophanes confuses the two treaties, or the Arabs were compelled to pay more either because they had violated the treaty or had not fulfilled the terms of the thirty-year truce; or perhaps even more to the point, they had wished to be rid of the Mardaïte threat.

At all events, Theophanes goes on to say that when they had learned of these things (i.e. the destruction of the Arabs and the peace treaty), the Khagan of the Avars and the kings further West, exarchs and Castaldi and the leaders of the nations lying in the West, sent embassies and gifts to the Emperor asking for treaties of peace with the Empire. The Emperor thereupon made a universal peace 'and there was great rejoicing in both East and West'.²¹¹

211. Theophanes, p. 356, OP. CIT.; Nicephorus, p. 33, but who writes 'those who dwell in the Western regions, that is the leader of the Avars and those leaders of the nations dwelling in the West', Cedrenus, p. 766, records only 'those who inhabit the West'; Zonaras, III, 318, 'the enemies of the Romans in the West'; and lastly, Leo the Grammarian, pp. 160, 161, 'those Scythians living in the West, the Chagan and kings and Castaldi in the regions further West'.

The defeat of the Arabs and the humiliating terms they were forced to accept as conditions for the treaty of peace made a deep impression upon the foes of Byzantium who were awed by her power as were those nations that wished to maintain friendly relations with Byzantium.

Although he no longer had a frontier along the fringes of the Empire, since the Croats and the Serbs were established as buffer tribes in the northwestern Balkan peninsula, the Khagan of the Avars nevertheless negotiated a peace treaty with the Byzantines soon after A.D. 678.²¹² There is some question concerning the attitude of the Lombards and the 'Castaldi'. It is certain that by 'Castaldi' Theophanes means the various dukes and Lombard rulers.²¹³ It is also certain that the dukes and leaders (castaldi) could not make separate treaties with the Empire since they were subjects of the king of the Lombards. The precise chronology of the peace treaty with the Lombards is impossible to determine. One should remember that up to that time the Byzantines refused to draft a treaty with the Lombards since they did not recognize the latter's conquests. They were content with simple truces. But it appears that following the intervention of Pope Agathon (678-681) the Byzantines agreed to a treaty with the Lombards. And it is possible that this was drawn up after the arrival of the legates of the Pope at Constantinople, or after the middle of the year A.D. 680.²¹⁴ The

212. Dölger, REGESTEN, No. 241.

213. Hartmann, p. 252, fn. 6, maintains that when Grimoald received in his service Aldzeo, leader of the Bulgars, who had fled to his court, he gave the Bulgar the title of 'Castaldus'. Elsewhere, in *ITALY UNDER THE LOMBARDS*, in C.M.H., II, 209, he writes that the castaldi were supervisors of the royal and ducal areas with military and civil powers. Bury, *OP. CIT.*, II, 313 on the other hand, says that the castaldi were Lombard dukes and chieftains.

214. Dölger, *OP. CIT.*, No. 240. He maintains that by this treaty of peace, the Lombard occupation of imperial territories was recognized. See also the two studies by Hartmann and his *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte usw.* Pirenne, *MAHOMET ET CHARLEMAGNE*, p. 38, who supports the year 680 and writes that Italy was divided between the Byzantines and Lombards by the treaty. The king of the Lombards, at the time was Perktarit I (A.D. 671 or 672-688).

Scythians referred to by Leo the Grammarian are something of a mystery. By Scythians, the Byzantines normally meant Bulgars, Huns and other Tartar-Mongol tribes. Kubrat's kingdom had already disintegrated, but it may be that one of his sons had sent an embassy to seek an alliance, or the protection, or a peace treaty from the Emperor.

A question has arisen concerning the identity of the 'exarchs of the nations lying in the West'. Since all chroniclers record 'the Khagan of the Avars and those beyond... the nations in the West' (Theophanes), and 'those dwelling in the Western regions, the king of the Avars and beyond....', one can infer that the reference is to the leaders of nations and tribes who inhabited the West beyond the Avar kingdom. And therefore that the kings or princes of the Franks are intended. Perhaps also the Wisigothic²¹⁵ rulers in the distant West were meant. Ostrogorsky²¹⁶ gives another interpretation. He maintains that the leaders of the Slavic tribes in the Balkans sent emissaries asking for peace and offering subjection to the Empire. Yet there were no exarchs or kings in the Balkans except the leaders of the Serbs and Croats, nations that had been encouraged to settle in the area by the Byzantines themselves and that had recognized Byzantine sovereignty.²¹⁷ The remaining Slavic tribes were subjects of the Empire with the exception of certain tribes in the Strymon river region who were then in a state of rebellion against the imperial authority. The sources are therefore quite clear. But these rebellious tribes of the Strymon were probably governed directly by the provincial imperial authority. Such a theory has been developed in depth by Sisic.²¹⁸ At all events, Ostrogorsky's interpretation conflicts with the sources which refer to kings and leaders of nations beyond the Avars and not the hither side of the Avars, if in fact such kings and leaders did exist in the Balkans.

215. Bury, *OP. CIT.*, II, 313.

216. Ostrogorsky, *OP. CIT.*, p. 125.

217. See Vol. I of the present History, Chapt. XXII.

218. F. Sisic, *HISTORY OF CROATIA etc.*, Zagreb, 1925.

The peace treaty drawn up between Constantine and Muawiyah was for a duration of thirty years. The treaty was endorsed by Yazid, but a few years later, the new Caliph, Abd al-Malik, was forced to seek a renewal of this. In the light of such information, the question arises as to whether the terms of the treaty had been honoured.

The Byzantine chroniclers make no reference to violations of the truce. On the other hand, considerable information is provided by the Arabs and Syrians. It is recorded for instance that in the 59th year, (in October 678 - September 679), the Arabs led by Safwan ben al-Muattah and Umayr ben al-Hubab seized the strong fortress of Camch or Camachum.²¹⁹ In the same year, Amr ben Murrah invaded Byzantine territory in which he spent the Winter²²⁰ and that Gunadah wintered in Rhodes.²²¹

In the 60th year (October 679 - September 680), the Arab chroniclers²²² record that Malik ibn Abdallah invaded imperial territory reaching as far as Isauria (southeastern Asia Minor). Rhodes was evacuated soon after the middle of 680 on the orders of Yazid.

As pointed out in an earlier paragraph, Uqbah had launched a major expedition into imperial Africa in the years 682 and 683. He was in the end defeated and slain, and the Byzantines together with their Berber allies expelled the Arabs from Ifrikyia. In the light of this information it is obvious that the Arabs in the period from 678 to 683 or 684 had continued to violate the terms of the peace treaty. It is certain that Yazid had prohibited invasions of imperial territories in Asia Minor²²³

219. Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, p. 288; Ibn al-Athir, III, 434; Honigmann, *DIE OSTGRENZE* usw., p. 56. The fortress was recovered by the Byzantines but was retaken by the Arabs in 710-711 (Theophanes, p. 377).

220. Ibn al-Athir, III, 430; Eliae Nisibeni; Brooks, *THE ARABS IN ASIA MINOR* etc., p. 189.

221. Khuwarazmi, in Baethgen, *OP. CIT.*, for the 59th year or the 990th of the Greeks (A.D. 679).

222. Al-Tabari, II, 196; Al-Athir, IV, 2; Yakubi, II, 302, but for the 61st year (A.D. 681).

223. Lammens, *LE CALIFAT DE YAZID* Ier; Cheira, *OP. CIT.*, p. 146.

which had become dangerous and costly to the Arabs, and furthermore had brought in less loot. But the most likely reason for this prohibition was the internal dissension of the Arabs that forced Yazid to make the decision since he had need of his military forces to meet the insurgent Arabs who had rebelled against him.

The Armenians who for so many years had been subjects of the Arabs, took advantage of the civil strife of the Arabs to revolt, very probably with the support of the Byzantines, and in 681-682 began to fight against their masters for independence.²²⁴

It appears that the Byzantines inevitably became irritated by the repeated violations of the peace and soon began to take counter-measures. It is true that the Greek chroniclers make no reference to such measures. But according to the Arabs,²²⁵ the Greeks in the 64th year of the Hegira (August 683-684) occupied Ascalon and Caesareia on the coast of Palestine. Both cities were pillaged and suffered considerable destruction. The Arab sources²²⁶ go on to add that in 684-685 the imperial forces took Mopsuesta and Germaniceia (Marash) forcing the Arab inhabitants to migrate. The imperial armies advanced as far as Melitene.²²⁷ It is also probable that the Byzantines incited the Mardaïtes to take up arms again. Abd al-Malik was in an exceptionally difficult position. Mutinies and insurrections against his rule throughout the vast Arab domain became more numerous and the proximity of the imperial armies was most threatening. Under the circumstances, he was forced to sue for a renewal of the peace but under more odious financial conditions, according to the Byzantine, Arab and Syrian chroniclers.²²⁸ One may well ask why the Byzantines did not take greater advantage

224. Filler, *QUAESTIONES DE LEONTII* etc., 19, 20; Grousset, *HISTOIRE DE L'ARMENIE*, p. 303.

225. Baladhuri, ed. Goeje, p. 143.

226. Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, pp. 293, 294, ed. De Goeje, p. 188; Khuwarazmi in Baethgen, p. 117; Cheira, *OP. CIT.*, 147; Wellhausen, *OP. CIT.*, p. 428.

227. Ibn al-Athir, 117, 188 and 185.

228. Dölger, *REGESTEN* No. 253; Caetani, *OP. CIT.*, for the 65th year of the Hegira (A.D. 684-685); Brooks, in *C.M.H.*, II, 406.

of the weaknesses of the Arabs to reconquer territories that were then occupied by the enemy, especially since the Arabs had not adhered to the terms of the peace treaty. The explanation may well lie with the illness of Constantine IV and his indecisiveness.

CHAPTER III

ITALY

The extremely troubled and delicate situation in the Italian peninsula has been described in previous volumes. Because of the inability of Byzantium in the 7th Century to spare troops and especially able officers for Italy, the antagonism between Constantinople and the imperial possessions in the peninsula grew ever more acute. This weakness of Byzantium was the direct result of the continual and costly wars waged against the Persians, the Avars and lastly the Arabs.

1

The influence of the Popes who were looked upon as the representatives of the Latin populations of Italy continued to grow, especially from the time that the Lombards turned to Catholicism and began to accept the religious leadership of Rome. The frightful defeats of the Byzantines at the hands of the Arabs and their initial incapability of repelling the new enemy did much to weaken the imperial authority and the regard for Constantinople.

The religious dissensions, the friction between the churches and the need for sanctions increased the tension and discontent of the people of Italy against the imperial authority.

The only Emperor who actually devoted his attention to affairs in the peninsula was Constantine III (Constans). He attempted to recover from the Lombards a part of Italy and to organize the Western defences against the impending Arab threat. His attempt to recover southern Italy failed, for the army he had at hand was not large enough to turn the tide. No support came from the local inhabitants and the Lombards, who were at loggerheads when his plan was first devised, soon united and

succeeded in frustrating his objective.²²⁹ This failure of Constantine brought serious repercussions throughout the length and breadth of the Italian peninsula. To properly prepare the defence of the country against the Arabs vast sums of money were needed but lacking, hence new taxes were imposed upon the population. And this in turn roused the wrath and the hatred of those who had to pay, especially the church upon whom the burden fell the heaviest.²³⁰

The population of Byzantine Italy at the end of the 7th Century was made up²³¹ of about 45% native Latins, 5% Goths who inhabited the area mostly near Ravenna and the Pentapolis, and 50% Easterners, the latter of whom had migrated from Greece and the East in general (Dalmatia, Illyricum, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and so on).

The circulation of coins had greatly diminished²³² for various reasons but especially because of the harsh taxation and the lack of trade activity.

Byzantine Italy had undergone in this Century a radical political and social change which altered the complexion of the province entirely. The basic structure of an area was centred on a strongly fortified city (*castello*) at the head of which was a tribune or a Count to whom all military and administrative officials were responsible.²³³ The army was composed of a local militia especially since the reign of Constantine III.²³⁴ This was the time when the first 'Numeri of Ravennates'²³⁵ made their appearance, together with the 'army of Rome', and so on. This militia was purely of a local nature. The tribune²³⁶ belonged to the families of wealthier or more powerful landowners and

229. Stratos, *BYZANTIUM* etc., III, p. 210.

230. L.P., I, 344; Pauli Diaconis, V, 11f.; Hodgkin, *Italy* etc., VI, 280.

231. Guillou, *REGIONALISME ET INDEPENDANCE* etc., 95-97.

232. Grierson, *COINAGE AND MONEY IN THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE*.

233. Romano, *LA DOMINAZIONE* etc., p. 321; Hodgkin, *ITALY* etc., VI, 526f.

234. Ganshof in Lot-Ganshof, *LES DESTINEES DE L'EMPIRE* etc., p. 224.

235. Numeri are military regiments or battalions.

236. From the Latin 'tribunus', commander of a legion or army unit.

gradually the title became hereditary. The dux or duke was placed above the tribunes, and he was from the time of Constantine III usually appointed directly by the Emperor. Senior members of the aristocracy made up the local senate of Rome. There were also the 'primatus de exercitus' who were the military aristocracy. The existence of these administrators diminished somewhat the power of the Exarch.²³⁷

In the period under examination two Exarchs are known, Gregory (A.D. 664-677) and Theodore (A.D. 677-684).²³⁸ The former is referred to in the decree of Constantine III dated 666 by which the see of Ravenna became autocephalus and independent of Rome.²³⁹ Theodore is known from the letter of Constantine IV addressed to Pope Donus in 678 in which he is referred to as the renowned patrician and Exarch of Italy and so on, and by his involvement in the disputes between Archbishop Theodore of Ravenna and the clergy.²⁴⁰

2

Throughout the period under review, the papal throne was occupied by the following Popes:

1. *Vitalian*, 30 July 657 - 27 January 672.²⁴¹ He received Constantine III in Rome in 663 and practiced a policy of compromise in an attempt to bridge the gap then existing between Byzantium and Rome. He supported Constantine IV who respected him highly. The Emperor in fact did not allow Vitalian's name to be removed from the diptychs of St. Sophia despite the adamant insistence of the church of Constantinople.²⁴²

2. *Adeodatus II*, 11 April 672 - 17 June 676. He rejected the

237. Diehl, *ETUDES... SUR L'EXARCHAT DE RAVENNE*, pp. 36f.; Bertolini, *ROMA* etc. p. 376.

238. Hodgkin, *OP. CIT.*, p. 536; Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, p. 173.

239. Agnelli, *LIBER PONTIFICALIS*, etc., pp. 350, 351; Dölger, *REGESTEN*, No. 232.

240. Mansi, XI, 201A; Agnelli, *OP. CIT.*

241. L.P., I, 343f.; Grumel, *LA CHRONOLOGIE*, p. 431.

242. Hartmann, *GESCHICHTE* usw., p. 257; Mansi, XI, 200.

synodical letter of the Patriarch John V and that of Constantine I. During his term in office the Archbishop of Ravenna Reparatus (671-677) who had succeeded Mavros, went to Constantinople and succeeded in having implemented the decree of Constantine III by which the see of Ravenna was proclaimed an autocephalus church.²⁴³ He also obtained for the clergy exemption from certain taxes.²⁴⁴

3. *Donus*, 2 November 676 - 11 April 678.²⁴⁵ To him Constantine addressed a letter in 678 requesting the presence of his legates for the impending Ecumenical Council. Reparatus, Archbishop of Ravenna, came to some agreement with him by which his see again became subject to Rome without losing its independence entirely.²⁴⁶

4. *Agatho*, 27 June 678 - 10 January 681.²⁴⁷ Originally from Sicily, he had received the letter sent to Donus. During his occupancy of the papal see, the Sixth Ecumenical Council was summoned. Theodore, Archbishop of Ravenna, who succeeded Reparatus, had become involved in a dispute with his clergy who accused him of misappropriating church funds for personal use, and he appealed to Agatho with whom he came to a new agreement.²⁴⁸

Agatho, as pointed out, had succeeded in bringing about peace between the Byzantines and the Lombards which endured for many years. The legates of Agatho persuaded Constantine to exempt the Popes from the obligatory payment traditionally made to Constantinople upon their election, without which payment the imperial decree sanctioning the election was not

243. Agnelli, L.P., *ECCLESIAE RAVENNATIS*, p. 354.

244. Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, p. 272; Guillou, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 177, 178.

245. L.P., I, 348; Grumel, *OP. CIT.*, p. 431.

246. L.P., I, p. 347 fn. 5 of Duchêsne. The Bishops of Ravenna sought always to obtain equal treatment with those of Milan; Agnelli, *OP. CIT.*, p. 360; Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, p. 272; Mann, *THE LIVES OF THE POPES* etc., I, 2, pp. 20-22.

247. L.P., I, 350-359; Grumel, *OP. CIT.*, p. 431.

248. Jaffe-Wattenbach, *REGESTA* usw., No. 2107; Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, p. 273; Mann *OP. CIT.*, pp. 23-48; Guillou, *OP. CIT.*, p. 208.

issued and the chosen Pope could not sit on the papal throne.²⁴⁹

5. *Leo II*, 17 August 682 - 3 July 683.²⁵⁰ He was also a Sicilian and ratified the *minutiae* of the Sixth Ecumenical Council. In his reign the privilege granted to the church of Ravenna was officially withdrawn and henceforth the bishops would be ordained by Rome. But the payment of fees to the church of Rome on the part of those ordained was also abolished.²⁵¹

6. *Benedict II*, 26 June 684 - 8 May 685.²⁵² During his brief occupancy of the papal throne, the right of approval of the election of the Pope was transferred from the Emperor to the Exarch of Italy. As has been repeatedly pointed out, this right was not only symbolic, for if the decree of approval was not received the pope-elect could not be ordained.²⁵³ By transferring the approval to the Exarch, the papal throne would not remain vacant for long periods as in the past.²⁵⁴

3

The murder of Constantine III, the preoccupation of the Byzantines with the suppression of the rebellion in Sicily, and the withdrawal of the army of the East from the southern provinces of Italy had unpleasant results for the Empire.

As stated in Volume III of this History,²⁵⁵ Constantine III had formed the Duchy of Calabria²⁵⁶ to include the whole of

249. L.P., I. 350-358; Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, p. 180. This was a traditional practice. It was first introduced by the Goths when they conquered Italy. The custom continued even after the reconquest of Italy by the Byzantines.

250. L.P., I, 359f.; Grumel, *OP. CIT.*, p. 431.

251. L.P., I, 361; Agnelli, *OP. CIT.*, p. 360; Jaffe-Wattenbach, *OP. CIT.*, No. 2123; Guillou, *OP. CIT.*, p. 208; Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, p. 273; Ganshof, *OP. CIT.*, p. 221.

252. L.P., I, 363; Grumel, *OP. CIT.*, p. 431.

253. L.P. I, 364, fn. of Duchêsne; Jaffe-Wattenbach, *OP. CIT.*, p. 242, for the year 684; Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, p. 180; Mann, *THE LIVES OF THE POPES* pp. 3-63; Caspar, *GESCHICHTE*, p. 472.

254. Hartmann, *GESCHICHTE ITALIENS* usw., II, 69; Romano, *OP. CIT.*, p. 322.

255. Volume III, p. 250.

256. Kyriakides, *BYZANTINE STUDIES*, II-V, pp. 279f.; Gay, *L'ITALIE MERIDIONALE*, etc., pp. 5-7.

southern Italy or the former province of Calabria, the region of ancient Bruttium, parts of Apulia and of Lucania. Taras was chosen as the seat of the new geographical division. The aim of Constantine was to improve the defensive structure of southern Italy against the Lombards by uniting all the scattered military units under a single commander.²⁵⁷ Without being actually subject to the general of Sicily, this Duchy was in a way an extension of the Sicilian 'theme'.²⁵⁸

Romuald,²⁵⁹ the military governor of Beneventum, assembled a large army and taking advantage of the weakness of the Byzantines attacked and captured Brindisi, Taranto and the surrounding country.²⁶⁰ The only towns remaining in imperial hands in southeastern Italy were Otranto and Callipolis.²⁶¹ The precise date of this attack is not known. I presume that it occurred after A.D. 671 and perhaps somewhat later at a time when the Byzantines were not in the position to send reinforcements to Italy on account of the major invasion of the Empire by the Arabs. At all events, after the loss of ancient Calabria, the name survived in the provinces of Bruttium and others. The new geographical division of Calabria contained all that was left of the Byzantine possessions in southern Italy. At the Sixth Ecumenical Council, the bishops of the cities of former Bruttium appear as bishops of Calabria.²⁶²

No further hostile action was taken by the Lombards against the remaining imperial possessions after this attack. A period of tacit peace ensued. Bishops of areas occupied by the Lombards were free to attend the synod in Rome which was summoned by Pope Agatho to prepare the participation of the church of Rome

257. Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 32-34; Gay, *OP. CIT.*, p. 7.

258. Constantine Porphyrogenetus, *DE THEM.*, Chapt. X and *DE ADM. IMP.*, Chapt. L, 88, 89, also, Vol. II, p. 188, notes of Jenkins.

259. Romuald governed the Duchy from 662 onwards when his father Grimoald became king of the Lombards. He was the *dux* from 671-687 after his father's death. See Hodgkin, *OP. CIT.*, VI, 62.

260. Pauli Diaconis, *HISTORIA LANGOBARDORUM*, VI, 1; Romano, *OP. CIT.*, p. 312; Hodgkin, VI, 335.

261. Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, p. 34; Hartmann, *OP. CIT.*, p. 252, and *ITALY UNDER THE LOMBARDS*, II, p. 205.

262. Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, p. 33.

in the impending Sixth Ecumenical Council.

At some time between 662 and 671 a branch of the Bulgar race led by one of the sons of Kubrat, Khagan of the Bulgarians who had died in the reign of Constantine III (Constans),²⁶³ fled to Italy. One version says that they had sought asylum with the Lombards, another that they approached the Byzantines.

Pauli Diaconis²⁶⁴ records that the Duke Alzeco entered with all his people (*sui ducatus exercitu*) peacefully into Italy, and submitted to the king Grimoald. The latter sent them to his son Romuald who then governed the Duchy of Beneventum. Hence Alzeco's passage into Italy occurred after 662 when Grimoald became king of the Lombards, and before 671, the year of his death.

Romuald settled the Bulgars in the uninhabited and desolate areas of Sepino, Boiano and Isernia, all near Campobassa.²⁶⁵ Alzeco lost the title of Duke but was given the rank of Castaldus.²⁶⁶ Since these areas are situated to the north of Beneventum, it is probable that they were deliberately settled there to act as a buffer against a possible Byzantine attack from the duchies of Rome or Naples,²⁶⁷ since the three towns lie on the Via Appia leading from Rome to Beneventum.

The Byzantine chroniclers give another version of the story. Nicephorus and Theophanes²⁶⁸ say that the fifth son of Kubrat (Kobrat according to the former and Krobat according to Theophanes) crossed the river Istros (Danube) then proceeded to Ravenna where he 'became a subject of the Romans'. The Byzantines thereupon settled them in the duchy of the Pentapolis (between Ravenna and Rome).

Which of the two versions is the most accurate? Both record

263. Theophanes, p. 357, 'in the reign of Constantine who had gone to the West...'

264. Pauli Diaconis, *OP. CIT.*, V, 29; Hodgkin, *OP. CIT.*, VI, 284; Hartmann, *GESCHICHTE ITALIENS usw.*, I, 252.

265. Guillou, *OP. CIT.*, p. 102.

266. Pauli Diaconis, *OP. CIT.*, V, 29; Hartmann, *GESCHICHTE usw.*, I, 252. See also fn. 213 in the preceding chapter.

267. Hodgkin, *OP. CIT.*, VI, 284.

268. Nicephorus, p. 34; Theophanes, p. 357.

by name the areas where the Bulgars had been settled, and therefore there can be no mistake or misunderstanding on the part of the copyist. Yet the Byzantines speak of the son of Kubrat, whereas Pauli Diaconis mentions the 'Dux Alzecus'. And the title of 'Dux' is not Bulgarian. Could it be that the branch of Bulgars led by Alzeco broke away from the Bulgars who had initially settled in Pannonia, then fled to king Dagobert who at first permitted them to colonize parts of his kingdom, then subsequently massacred a great number of them. Alzeco may then have received the rank of Dux, or Duke, a Frankish title, and with the surviving remnants of his band of Bulgars escaped to the country of the Lombards. In that case, both versions are correct, as Guillou rightfully maintains.

The weakness of the Byzantines and the difficulties of the Pope forced the latter to attempt some kind of durable peace between the Byzantines and Lombards.²⁶⁹ As has been often pointed out, the Byzantines would not accept a final peace with the Lombards since they were reluctant to recognize the Lombard conquests in Italy. But the impotence of the Empire forced the Byzantines to be more conciliatory. And at last, a treaty of peace was concluded.

269. Bertolini, *ROMA DI FRONTE* etc., p. 366.

CHAPTER IV

THE BALKAN PENINSULA

Regarding the settlement of the Slavs in the Balkan peninsula, I have already written at length and frequently enough,²⁷⁰ and will not return to the subject except summarily. The lack of reliable sources and the numerous attempts to make of the events a political issue have made unbelievably difficult the ascertainment of the real facts in the 7th Century for this vital area. Moreover, in the only extant source which is hagiographical and therefore not very reliable, there are recorded incidents and events which have been unduly magnified in importance and have become especially corrupted and modified. Under the circumstances, a cautious sifting of the sources is essential to obtain some modicum of truth.

1

One must begin by distinguishing between invasions and permanent settlements. The Slavs made numerous inroads into the heart of the Balkans in the 5th and 6th as well as in the 7th Centuries, but never alone, for the Slavs were a normally peaceful race of people who generally avoided conflict, hence their early subjection to the more belligerent and warlike Hunno-Turkish tribes. The latter tribes were small in number and made use of the more populous masses of Slavonic peoples. There exist many sources referring to these invasions, but concerning their permanency the only extant sources are hagiographical and there exist certain passages in the works of Constantine Porphyrogenetus which were dedicated to his son Romanos, namely, the *De Administrando Imperio*.

There appears to have been no permanent settlement before

270. See Vol. I, Chapt. 22, Vol. II, Chapt. 8, para. 3, and Vol. III, Chapt. 7.

the end of the 6th Century. The fact that incursions took place does not necessarily indicate that lasting settlements also occurred at the same time. Indeed, the theory has been propounded to the effect that until the reign of Phocas, the 'limes' or the limits of the frontier on the Danube had remained unchanged.²⁷¹ It is certain that extensive areas had been laid waste by the continuous raids of Avars with Slavs and Bulgar tribes.²⁷²

It is probable that before the beginning of the 7th Century some Slavonic tribes subject to the Avars had settled in the deserted northern regions of the Balkans, although this is not absolutely certain. In A.D. 598 or about 600,²⁷³ in the wake of the repeated victories of the Byzantines, a peace treaty was negotiated with the Avars by which the Danube continued to mark the northernmost limits of the Empire. One would expect that following the treaty and the withdrawal of the Avars, the Byzantines would clear the areas of those tribes that had crossed the Danube, settled therein and refused to accept the rule of the local imperial administrators.²⁷⁴ But with the reign of Phocas, new invasions by Avar-Slavonic tribes began, and during the reign of Heraclius I, especially following the withdrawal of the imperial army which was sent to reinforce the Emperor's armies

271. Ion Nestor, *LA PENETRATION DES SLAVES* etc., in *Revue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes*, Vol. I, 1963, and his *L'ETABLISSEMENT DES SLAVES*, etc. in *Dacia*, Vol. V, 1961.

272. I say Bulgar tribes because there did not exist at the time either a Bulgar state or single nation, but tribes variously known as Coutrigurs, Cotragurs, Utrigurs, Hunogunduri and so on, about whom more in the next chapter.

273. There is some doubt regarding the date of the Avar treaty. See the monograph by Mrs. M. Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, *THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE AVAR INVASIONS IN THE REIGN OF MAURICE*, in *Miscellanea of the National Foundation for Research*, Vol. II, pp. 145-205.

274. There exists another view which conflicts with this. P. Charanis, in *ETHNIC CHANGES* etc., in *D.O.P.*, Vol. 13/1959, argues that there is no indication that the Slavs who had settled there before A.D. 600 fled or were forced to leave. To this argument I can reply that there is absolutely no evidence or source recording at the time a permanent settlement in the area. The sources speak only of invasions. How can one assume with reason that the Byzantines, after having sacrificed so much to reconquer these territories from the enemy, would permit rebellious tribes to remain there.

in the Persian campaign,²⁷⁵ the Avar-Slavs made two big incursions in 623 and 626 respectively, and the Slavic penetration of the Balkans assumed major proportions.

After their defeat before the walls of Constantinople in 626, the Avars withdrew closely pressed by the imperial army under Theodore, brother of Heraclius. The Byzantines soon reoccupied the Balkan peninsula and established a garrison commanded by a strategus (general) at Belgrade.²⁷⁶ The Slavs who may have settled in the Balkans were not expelled but subdued. One should bear in mind that it was the established policy of Byzantium to use alien tribes for colonization of desolate or sparsely populated areas.

Some historians²⁷⁷ incorrectly maintain that the entire population of the peninsula had vanished and that only Slavic colonists remained. As will be pointed out in the following pages, the indigenous inhabitants of Dacia, Moesia I and II, Dardania, and Macedonia survived. Many had fled to the towns but with the ensuing peace a large number returned to their homes and a *modus vivendi* existed between the Byzantines and Slavonic tribes.²⁷⁸ As Charanis rightly observes, nothing is known either of the dates or of the extent of the Slavonic settlements.²⁷⁹

The unique source dealing with the penetrations in the northern and central Balkans is the *Miracula of Saint Demetrius*. This is a collection for the most part of homilies or sermons delivered by various bishops of Thessaloniki²⁸⁰ whose main purpose was to extol the Saint and his miraculous intervention in

275. Theophanes, p. 302.

276. Constantine Porphyrogennetus, *DE ADM. IMP.*, Chapt. 32.

277. Obolensky, *THE EMPIRE AND ITS NORTHERN NEIGHBOURS*, and his *THE BYZANTINE COMMONWEALTH*; Ostrogorsky, *BYZANTIUM AND THE SOUTH SLAVS*.

278. Karayiannopoulos, *ZUR FRAGE DER SLAVENANSIEDLUNGEN* etc.; Kyriakides, *BYZANTINE STUDIES*; Iorga, *NOTES D'UN HISTORIEN*.

279. Charanis, *ON THE SLAVONIC SETTLEMENTS* etc., and his *THE TRANSFER OF POPULATION*, etc.

280. Lemerle, *LA COMPOSITION* etc. *DES MIRACLES S. DEMETRIUS*.

preserving the great city. It is in other words a purely hagiographic text which generally gives no hints of chronology nor has any historical continuity in the narrative of events. It is worthy of note that to date there has been no complete edition of the text of the *Miracula* nor has a critical study of the events described therein appeared which supplies the information to the effect that different tribes had settled in the region round Thessaloniki and other parts of Macedonia.

Most of these tribes inhabited the mountainous terrain which accounts for the fact that most Slavic place-names are found in the mountains or elevated areas or in valleys containing villages with a mixed population. The Slavs would migrate in tribes without any particular political organization and were not easily subdued.²⁸¹ But once they submitted to imperial rule they lived in peaceful coexistence with their neighbours becoming eventually Hellenized, especially after their conversion to Christianity, thanks to the strong influence and power of the church. Occasionally, however, they would defy the authorities who were forced to conduct military expeditions to reimpose their rule over the recalcitrant elements, as happened in A. D. 658²⁸² and later in the reign of Justinian II.

Some branches into which the Slavs were concentrated, whether subject or free, had their own supreme leader or chieftain. These branches or groups were known by the Byzantines as 'Sclaviniae'. According to Amantos,²⁸³ the Sclaviniae were situated for the most part in Dacia, Moesia and in the Rhodope region. The assumption that Macedonia was called Sclavinia because it was heavily populated by Slavs is

281. Leo, in the *TACTICA* in Migne, P.G., Vol. 107, p. 970, paras. 99 and 101, writes that many tribes were subdued by force; Runciman, *BYZANTIUM AND THE SLAVS*; Zlatarski, *GESCHICHTE DER BULGAREN*, pp. 1 and 2.

282. Antoljak mistakenly writes that the Sclaviniae were dissolved. Theophanes whom he cites explicitly writes on p. 347, 'and they were subdued'.

283. Amantos, *HISTORY*, I, 471, 472, and his *THE SLAVS IN GREECE*, also *SOME NOTES ON MEDIEVAL GEOGRAPHY*.

absurd. The Greeks had not vanished from the scene, for otherwise how could one account for the Hellenization of the Slavs if in fact Greeks and Slavs had not coexisted in the area. Lemerle²⁸⁴ does not agree completely with Amantos' view which minimizes to an extreme degree the penetration of the Slavs in Greek-inhabited areas. But Kyriakides²⁸⁵ on the other hand maintains that the Slavs were established primarily in the mountainous regions about which the Byzantines were not deeply concerned except in the event the Slavonic tribes ambushed or interfered with the passes and the livelihood of the local inhabitants. It is to be expected that the *Miracula* would exaggerate events, for how else could it magnify the intervention of Saint Demetrius and his salvation of the city.

Such was the situation in the provinces of north and central Illyricum on the basis of information supplied by the *Book of Miracles* which more often than not is exaggerated and too often fictional.

The second book of the *Miracula* describes two incidents which I feel should be examined closely since chronologically they are associated with the period with which the present study deals.

2

I will describe these two incidents as they are usually presented by scholars²⁸⁶ — the incident referred to in Chapter 5 and that described in Chapter 4, although I believe the order to be reversed so that the correct sequence should be Chapter 4 followed by Chapter 5.

284. Lemerle, *PHILIPPES ET LA MACEDOINE ORIENTALE*, p. 115.

285. Kyriakides, Review of Lemerle's Book in *Makedonika*, II, 1953, pp. 697f.

286. Lemerle, *LA COMPOSITION ET LA CHRONOLOGIE* etc., in *B.Z.* Vol. 46/1953; Barisic, *LES MIRACLES DE ST. DEMETRIUS* etc., Byzantine Institute No. 219, Belgrade, 1953, holds the opposite view.

The second book of the *Miracula of Saint Demetrius*²⁸⁷ in Chapter 5 relates the following:

More than sixty years after the 'great sacking' (?) took place, a new race of people appeared in the land of the Avars, consisting of the descendants of those who had been taken captive and transported there by the Avars from the northern Balkans, Thrace, and even from outside the walls of Constantinople itself, to parts of Lower Pannonia and to the province whose former capital city was 'Sirmium'.²⁸⁸ The captives, or rather the Greeks etc. who had been carried off, 'intermarried with the Avars and Bulgars', begot offspring, became a 'numerous race', but clinging to their Christian religion, baptized their children, 'spoke often of the land of their forefathers', and had a great desire to return to their native country. The Khagan of the Avars appointed as their leader a certain Kouver who when learning of the wishes of his people gathered the Romans and other 'pagans' with their families and their weapons and despite the fierce opposition of the Avars whom they overcame in battle five or six times, forced the Khagan to retreat to the north, then themselves crossed the Danube. When they reached 'our regions they halted in the Keramesion plain'. There the Romans asked to proceed to their 'native cities', some to Thessaloniki, others to Constantinople, and others to the various towns of Thrace.

But evil counsellors advised Kouver to retain leadership of this vast multitude of people in order to possess great power. Then an embassy was sent to the Emperor requesting that he remain there with his people and that the nearby tribes of the Drogubites be ordered to supply them with victuals. And this

287. There are extant various manuscripts which remain unpublished. I use in this instance the edition of the Bollandists which was reprinted in Migne, P.G., in Vol. 116. A fine English translation of this particular miracle accompanied by a critical study has been made by Charanis, *KOUVER, THE CHRONOLOGY* etc., in *Balkan Studies*. I also use the selections of hagiographical texts published by Tougard, *DE L'HISTOIRE PROFANE* etc.

288. Sirmium is the modern Mitrovica of Yugoslavia on the left bank of the Sava River, some 50 miles from its confluence with the Danube. It fell in A.D. 582 to the Avars after a prolonged siege.

took place. But when many went 'to the tents of the Slavs... for supplies of food' (I presume to the huts of the Slavs Drogubites) and discovered that Thessaloniki was not very far distant, a great number with their wives and children proceeded thither and thanks to the help of the 'Deputy Commander' (probably the governor of the city), they were sent by sea to Constantinople.

When Kouver learned of this, he devised a satanic plan. He would send someone who could converse fluently the language, that of the Romans, Slavs and Bulgars and would pretend that he had come to help the Emperor. In this manner various agents of his would enter Thessaloniki and seize the city by guile. Then Kouver would attack the 'nations round and would subdue them'.

And in fact a certain Mavros was sent who 'by false oaths' succeeded in deceiving the governor and through him 'the most devout Emperor'. The latter thereupon sent Mavros the 'Horationa'²⁸⁹ act of consul together with a bandon (banner), and appointed him general, that is, leader of all those who had left the Keramisian plain and had settled in Thessaloniki. But certain people 'of the Greek race' who knew Mavros, declared that he had never kept faith nor oath. Mavros thereupon seized them and had them beheaded. Following this, the Christians dared not speak out. Mavros appointed his own lieutenants (pentecontarchs) and decurions (decarchs) and planned to seize the city during the celebration of the Resurrection on Saturday evening.

The Emperor in the meantime who was unaware of the scheme, ordered Sisinius, strategos 'of the Karabon' (of the fleet) to proceed to Thessaloniki in order to help Mavros attract

289. Tougard, OP. CIT., Gelzer in DIE GENESIS etc., and Byeus, who edited and translated in Latin the Books of Miracles, translated 'Horationa' as a tunic or dress. But as Dujcev, UN PASSAGE OBSCUR etc., so correctly points out, the rank of consul, which had been abolished as a title and as an indication of the year in the reign of Justinian, came to be used only as an honorary award granted by the Emperor. See Bury, THE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM etc.; Economides, LES LISTES DES PRESEANCES etc. Hence the 'Horationa' signifies an award since it was an honorary title given by award.

more refugees. Sisinius sailed 'from Greece' and arrived in Skiathos on Palm Sunday, the island being deserted and uninhabited long since. And because the winds were unfavourable, he decided to celebrate the holy days on Skiathos. But in the night, Saint Demetrius roused him from his sleep thrice and commanded Sisinius to sail without delay to Thessaloniki. And Sisinius was 'at a loss' due to the strong contrary winds. But the third time the Saint was insistent and promised that the wind would be favourable. So Sisinius ordered the unfurling of the sails and in fact as soon as the ships left the anchorage, the wind turned and he arrived at Thessaloniki on Wednesday at noon. When Mavros realized that his plans would come to nought, he fell ill. The general, who was unaware of Mavros's plot, ordered his army, Mavros and those who supported him, to pitch camp to the West of the city to facilitate those who wished to flock there from the Keramisian plain. There they remained many days.

On the Emperor's instructions, Sisinius with his ships and those sent from Constantinople, on which Mavros and the refugees embarked, set sail for the capital. There Mavros was received with honours befitting a 'leader'. But his son betrayed the plan of his father and Kouver to seize Thessaloniki. When the truth was finally confirmed, the Emperor did not execute Mavros. He stripped him of all his titles and confined him to a suburb of Constantinople under close guard.

Who indeed cannot marvel at 'the passionate desire and the tutelage and the support of the memorable patron and saviour of our city Demetrius...'?

Such in brief, if one can call it brief, is the fifth miracle of the second book of the *Miracula* of Saint Demetrius.

Many questions arise which call for some kind of reasonable answer as regards the events related in this text. Irrespective of whether it is a purely hagiographical account, the purpose of which is obviously to sing the praises of the Saint who alone was responsible for the salvation of Thessaloniki, what actual historical value does it possess? Very justifiably does Barisic²⁹⁰ write that so uncertain is the chronology (and I would add, the

290. Barisic, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 148, 149.

reliability) of events that are recorded in the second book of Miracles that each historian or scholar must make his or her own personal conclusion. In view of such obscurity, many learned historians have preferred not to use Book II as a source for the historical picture.

Before presenting my own conclusions, some answer, if indeed this is possible, must be found for the following questions: 1) the identity of Kouver, 2) the identity of the race of people who accompanied him, 3) the location of the Keramesian plain, 4) the identity of the Dragubites, 5) the identity of Mavros and Sisinius, 6) the date of the 'great sacking', 7) the probable dates of these occurrences, 8) the eventual fate of Kouver and Mavros, and lastly, 9) the date of the text of Book II of the *Miracula*.

1. The reply to the first question has become incredibly involved and perplexing. Grégoire²⁹¹ has supported a very odd theory to the effect that Crobatus, one of the Croatian chieftains, Coubrates (or Crobatus), first king of the Bulgars, and Kouver of the Book of Miracles are one and the same person. Lemerle²⁹² had earlier supported this far-fetched theory, but in a subsequent monograph repudiated Grégoire's argument.

On the other hand, Tafrali,²⁹³ initially Charanis,²⁹⁴ and Setton²⁹⁵ maintained that Coubrates and Kouver were

291. Grégoire, *L' ORIGINE ET LE NOM DES CROATES* etc.

292. Lemerle, *LA COMPOSITION ET LA CHRONOLOGIE* etc.; and his *INVASIONS ET MIGRATIONS*, etc.

293. Tafrali, *THESSALONIQUE DES ORIGINES* etc.

294. Charanis, *ON THE CAPTURE OF CORINTH*, etc.; and his *ETHNIC CHANGES* etc.

295. Setton, *THE BULGARS IN THE BALKANS* etc. who has contended that a detachment of Onogur Bulgars had captured Corinth in 641-642 and the city was liberated during the campaign of 658 by Constantine III. This theory has been challenged by Charanis who argues that since A.D. 586 when Corinth had been occupied briefly by the Avars (on the basis of Michael the Syrian) the Byzantines never lost control of the city. But irrespective of Charanis's view who misinterprets the looting of lower Corinth (Michael the Syrian, II, 362, 363) as an outright occupation of the town, I have pointed out in Vol. III, p. 277 of my *History*, that Theophanes speaks of an expedition by Constantine III against Sclavinia, and the Peloponnese was never referred to as Sclavinia. See Amantos, *THE SLAVS IN GREECE*.

assuredly identical.

An entirely opposite point of view, on the grounds that Kouver was a different person from Coubrates because of the considerable gap in years between the death of the latter and the rebellion of the former, is held by Maricq,²⁹⁶ Ostrogorsky,²⁹⁷ Barisic,²⁹⁸ Runciman,²⁹⁹ Burmov,³⁰⁰ Ahrweiler,³⁰¹ and lastly Charanis.³⁰²

There is yet another interpretation which appears to be more plausible and could perhaps be deduced from the source itself. Although the entire problem of the Bulgars will be dealt with at great length in the ensuing chapter, in order to clarify the subject of Kouver certain facts should be mentioned at this point. Nicephorus³⁰³ and Theophanes³⁰⁴ state that the five sons of Coubrates, first king of the Bulgars, had, despite the explicit command of their father, separated a few years following his death. The fourth of these sons, whose name is not recorded, crossed the Istros (Danube) into Pannonia with a branch of Bulgars who chose to follow him, where he settled and became a vassal of the Khagan of the Avars.

A theory has been recently propounded to the effect that this fourth son of Coubrates is the Kouver of the Book of Miracles. Certainly in the texts that have been published, Kouver is not described as Bulgar³⁰⁵ but it is probably that as a son of the king, even though that king had revolted years before and had defeated the Avars, he was given the leadership of one of the

296. Maricq, *NOTES SUR LES SLAVES*, who argues that if one is to accept this identity, then the narrative of Nicephorus and Theophanes must be rejected. But this narrative is supported by the Armenian text ascribed to the chronicler Ananias of Shirak who was a contemporary of the events.

297. Ostrogorsky, *THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE IN THE WORLD* etc.

298. Barisic, *LES MIRACLES DE ST. DEMETRIUS* etc.

299. Runciman, *A HISTORY OF THE FIRST* etc., p. 20.

300. Burmov, *LES SIEGES DE THESSALONIQUE* etc.

301. Ahrweiler, *BYZANCE ET LA MER*, p. 27.

302. Kouver, *THE CHRONOLOGY* etc.

303. Nicephorus, pp. 33, 34.

304. Theophanes, p. 357.

305. Lemerle maintains that in the unpublished Paris Codex No. 1517, he is referred to as a 'Bulgar'. The Codex is a 12th Century parchment containing the Miracles of Saint Demetrius.

numerous 'nations' which constituted the Avar Empire and lived as subjects of the Avars. Although Runciman finds such an explanation far-fetched and suggests that one should not be confused by the similarity in spelling of the names, the interpretation has been accepted by Moravcsik,³⁰⁶ Zlatarski,³⁰⁷ Dujcev,³⁰⁸ Besevliev,³⁰⁹ and other Bulgarian historians with whose works, however, I am not acquainted.

Such are the existing schools of thought concerning Kouver. He was probably a Bulgar although none of the edited texts of the *Miracula* says as much, and perhaps, in accordance with the Bulgarian interpretation, he was the son of Coubrates, first king of the Bulgarian nation. The Khagan of the Avars had appointed Kouver to rule one of the alien but subject nations.

2. The question next arises regarding the identity of the people who supported Kouver in his rebellion against the Avars and who accompanied him into Byzantine territory.

Since the incident is recorded solely in the *Miracula* of St. Demetrius, the answer must of necessity be deduced from the information contained therein. The source states that this race of people consisted of captives who were taken by the Avars and carried to Pannonia. And that when these people reached Macedonia they were anxious to return to the towns from which their forefathers had come mentioning respectively in paragraph 196 that these included Thessaloniki, the towns of Thrace and Constantinople. Then the source goes on to say that Kouver 'took with him all the Romans and other pagans as well....' In other words, the greatest majority of these people was Roman (i.e. Greek)³¹⁰ originally from the regions of Thessaloniki and Thrace. Hence Kouver entered Macedonia³¹¹ with this

306. Moravcsik, *BYZANTINOTURCICA*, II, 165.

307. Zlatarski, *GESCHICHTE* usw.

308. Dujcev, *DIE ROLLE DES BULGARISCHEN* usw.

309. Besevliev, *ZUR DEUTUNG UND DATIERUNG* usw.; and his note on the payment received by Tervelis. The Russian text has been used in a typewritten Greek translation.

310. Mavros was sent because he knew well the language of the Greeks.

311. Ostrogorsky, *THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE* etc.; Charanis, *ETHNIC CHANGES* etc., and his *KOUVER, THE CHRONOLOGY*, etc.

Byzantine community. The others who accompanied them, the 'pagans', are obviously the non-Christians who were known by the church as 'ethnikoi'. It follows, therefore, that they were Slavs and Bulgars who made up the group that accompanied Kouver when he broke away from his brothers. I find it difficult to conceive how this Byzantine population which had clung to its religious and traditional beliefs so tenaciously could be identified by modern historians as the first or earliest Bulgars.³¹²

3. What was the 'Karamesion plain' and how did Kouver reach it? The Book of Miracles records that after crossing the Danube 'taking his people with him... he came to our land and settled in the Keramesion plain...' From this excerpt one concludes that Kouver proceeded in the direction of Thessaloniki³¹³ and therefore the Keramesion plain must be situated not distant from that city. Initially Tafel maintained, on the basis of Pachymeres,³¹⁴ that the plain was to the north of Heracleia in Pelagonia near Lake Ochrid. But in another monograph, Tafel³¹⁵ identifies it with the plain of Monastir. According to Lemerle,³¹⁶ it is most probably the plain situated between Monastir and Prilep (Perlepes). Tafrali reaches the same conclusion.³¹⁷ The Miracula state that Kouver asked that his people be victualled by the race of the Drogubites who dwelt nearby and that the Drogubites had informed them that Thessaloniki was not far etc. But the Monastir plain is quite a

312. Cancova-Petkova, *BULGARIANS AND BYZANTIUM* etc., which states they were all Bulgarians of Pannonia; Angelov, *LA FORMATION DE LA NATIONALITE BULGARE*, maintains that the proto-Bulgars under Kouver were settled etc. Dujcev, *DIE ROLLE DES BULGARISHEN VOLKSTUMS* usw., writes that a proto-Bulgarian nation was established according to the Miracula of St. Demetrius. But all these claims are not supported by any source, least of all by the Miracula.

313. I write, in the direction of Thessaloniki, because the anonymous author of the second book of the Miracula is deemed a resident of that city, hence 'in our land' obviously means in the general area or direction of Thessaloniki.

314. Pachymeres, ed. Bonn, I, 335.

315. Tafel, *DE VIA MILITARI ROMANORUM EGNATIA* usw., Tübingen, 1842, p. 41.

316. Lemerle, *OP. CIT.*

317. Tafrali, *THESSALONIQUE DES ORIGINES* etc.; Zlatarski, *OP. CIT.*; Dujcev, *OP. CIT.*

distance from the city and the Drogubites lived in the region of Veroea and beyond to as far as Yannitsa Lake. In the light of this information, the identity of the Keramesion plain with the plain of Monastir must be rejected. More recently, it has been suggested that the plain north of Yannitsa was known to the Romans as 'Kyrrou-Mansio' (mansio signifying station, settlement, quarters) and is the modern Paleocastro on the southern flank of Mt. Paicos and at the entrance to Almopia.³¹⁸ This latter identification conforms more with the information in the *Miracula* stating that Thessaloniki was nearby.

One may well ask how Kouver reached this particular plain. The fords across the Danube were not numerous.³¹⁹ Before A.D. 626, the passages in what is today Yugoslavia were in the possession of the Avars, hence he could not have crossed there before 626. They successively fell into the hands of the Byzantines, the Croats and the Serbs, and consequently they would have had to receive their permission to use these passages. The fords of the Danube in Dacia and Moesia II were until 679 controlled by the Byzantines. They were subsequently occupied by the Bulgars of Asparuch, therefore, after A.D. 679 it would have been impossible to cross the river by way of these passages.

Another question that may well be asked is why did these migrants penetrate so deeply into the Balkans. Between the Danube and Macedonia proper there existed numerous stretches of land that were uninhabited or were sparsely populated in which the migrants could easily enough have remained and swelled the population. The only explanation in my opinion is that the majority of the 'race' led by Kouver was Greek and these people had wished to return to those areas where their forefathers had dwelt, which, after all, is what the *Book of Miracula* says.

Using the above facts, I have concluded that the move southwards took place some time between A.D. 626 and 679 and that Kouver was forced to halt in this plain by the 'Romans'.

4. Regarding the identity of the Drogubites, the *Miracula*

318. Hionides, G., *HISTORY OF VEROEA*, II, 12, Thessaloniki, 1972.

319. Iorga, *EPOQUE ET CARACTERE* etc.

states that they were a Slavic race³²⁰ or rather, tribes, since it mentions 'nations of the Drogubites', who were subjects of the Byzantine Empire, and Kouver had asked the Emperor to command them to provide food for his people. They were scattered throughout the region between Veroea, Yannitsa and Thessaloniki where they lived in mixed villages.³²¹ They were soon converted to Christianity. It was to the tents of these tillers of the soil and shepherds that the Greeks of Kouver went for food and supplies.

5. Who exactly were Mavros and Sisinnius? Mavros is presented as an agent of Kouver 'a certain outstanding officer of Kouver and cunning'....

The Greeks who knew him when he was awarded the honorary title of consul and was delegated as leader of all the migrants of the Keramesian plain, reported that he never kept his faith or word, 'but always practised villainy, perjury and deceit...' Besides being 'familiar with our tongue...', that is, Greek,³²² he knew Latin, Slavonic and Bulgarian.

Moreover, the name 'Mavros' is neither Bulgarian nor Slavic. One derivation is that it is a translation of the word 'negroul' which means black in the Daco-Roman dialect, or the language spoken by the Romanized Dacians. The first prince of Vlachia in the 13th Century, incidentally, was named Negroul.³²³

320. Niederle, MANUEL etc., I, 106; Charanis, KOUVER etc. I cannot understand why Dujcev, OP. CIT., takes them as proto-Bulgars despite the explicit statement that they were Slavs. Zakythinos, THE SLAVS IN GREECE, p. 30.

321. KAMENIATES, ed. BONN, p. 496.

322. The author of the Book of Miracles was most probably a senior divine of Thessaloniki and writes in Greek. For the author to write that Mavros knew 'our language' would indicate that he knew Greek well. I do not agree with Charanis (KOUVER etc.) who argues that besides Bulgarian which was his mother tongue, Mavros was acquainted with Slavonic, Greek and Latin. This conflicts with the text of the Miracula upon which all contemporary historians rely as a source. As I have pointed out, the text explicitly says (line 1368) that Mavros, besides 'knowing our tongue' that is the language of the author, he was versed in 'Roman (i.e. Latin), Slavonic and Bulgarian'. In other words, in addition to his native tongue, he knew three foreign languages among which was Bulgarian.

323. Tafrali, OP. CIT., p. 132 and fn. 3.

This is certainly not the first time the name is encountered in Byzantine history. In the reign of Constantine the Great there lived the patricius Mavros who in fact built the imposing palace at Constantinople from which a quarter of the city situated West of the harbour of Sophias³²⁴ derived its name. Mavros in Greek signifies dark, or dark-complexioned. Many Greeks bore the name and it is indeed very common today. Its Greek derivation is not doubted. In this instance, therefore, Mavros was probably a descendant of one of those inhabitants taken captive by the Avars from the area of Thessaloniki, Thrace or Constantinople, who learned other languages when his family was still in Pannonia and for this reason he was well received in Thessaloniki, regardless of the fact that the migrants who came with him were aware of his dubious character. More recently, Ahrweiler has argued that when Mavros 'with his army' was transported to Constantinople, he rebelled against the Emperor Artemius (A.D. 714-715). She cites the *Miracula* and an unpublished seal which the learned sigillographer Father V. Laurent³²⁵ had referred her to.

324. S.O.C., pp. 146, 12 and 148, 5; Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine*, p. 369.

325. Ahrweiler, *OP. CIT.*, p. 29, fn. 2. Neither reference is correct. Migne, P.G., line 1368 which she cites makes absolutely no mention of the rebellion by Mavros and indeed in Thrace. On the other hand, line 1376 states that when the son of Mavros betrayed to the Emperor his father's plan, the Emperor arrested Mavros, deprived him of his titles 'and confined him to the suburbs under close guard...', in other words, he was put under close arrest in one of the suburbs of the capital. Ahrweiler maintains that the seal reads 'Mavros' patricius and leader of the 'Sermisian Bulgars', identifying Sermisian as 'Keramesian' and argues that this dates without doubt in the 8th Century. Charanis correctly observes that since the date is not recorded on the seal, only external evidence and the style of lettering could provide clues for the dating. I would add that there is so little variation in the seals and coins, at least in the last quarter of the 7th and the first of the 8th Centuries, that the precise dating would be problematical. For example, until recently, the coins of Leontius (695-698) were erroneously identified as coins of Leo the Isaurian. See Grierson, *CATALOGUE OF THE BYZANTINE COINS* etc., p. 610. Moreover, I would point out that the seal mentions 'Sermisian Bulgars'. In the Keramesian plain the Bulgars constituted a small minority and their leader was Kouver. By far the greatest majority was Greek. Sermisian may mean the inhabitant of Sirmium which was rebuilt and was captured by the Bulgars in the

Sisinnius was a strategos of the Karabon (fleet). We are informed by the book of Miracles that he was 'a man of prudence in both speech and in manner and a pious person devoted to God...' It is most probable that the fleet of the Karabisiani was established by Constantine III after the naval engagement of Phoenix, apparently to protect the coasts of Greece, Asia Minor and the islands against raids and the piratical incursions of the Arab fleet. The fact that it was unable to prevent the Moslem fleet, which far outnumbered it, to enter the Sea of Marmora and lay siege to Constantinople for many years, does not as some scholars maintain³²⁶ signify that the force did not exist. While the imperial fleet was preoccupied with the defence of the city, the fleet of the Karabisiani attacked Egypt to prevent the departure of the Egyptian armada. In A.D. 677-678, it destroyed near Syllaeum the fleeing Arab fleet and in 677-678 disembarked troops on the coast of Syria, to give support to the Mardaites who had taken Mt. Lebanon.³²⁷ The light cruiser fleet therefore already existed and it was commanded by a certain strategos by name Sisinnius. It has been maintained³²⁸ that this Sisinnius is the same as the patricius Sisinnius who in A.D. 720-721 was sent by Leo III on an embassy to the Bulgars to seek their support against the Arabs.³²⁹ The former Emperor Artemius, who was then living in exile in Thessaloniki, had persuaded this same Sisinnius to obtain the support of the Bulgars so as to enable him to recover the throne of Constantinople. And in fact, Artemius with Sisinnius and the Bulgars had marched as far as Heracleia where, however, the Bulgars seized Artemius and beheaded Sisinnius.³³⁰ Charanis³³¹ is again correct in pointing out that Theophanes records no less than six patricii by name Sisinnius. I

9th Century. It was retaken by the Byzantines at a later date. Could it be that a certain Mavros, a patrician, was made leader of the Bulgars of Sirmium?

326. Ahrweiler, *LA MER* etc. pp. 22, 23, who maintains as much and that the organization occurred in the reign of Constantine IV after 678-680.

327. See above, Chapt. II para. 4 and 5.

328. Ahrweiler, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 27-29; J. Laurent, *SUR LA DATE* etc.

329. Nicephorus, p. 55.

330. Nicephorus, pp. 55, 56; Theophanes, p. 400.

331. Charanis, *KOUVER* etc.

should add that Nicephorus mentions two persons with the same name. I would again repeat Runciman's observation to the effect that one should not be misled by the similarity of names to identify the person who concerns us in this passage.

6 & 7. When did the 'great sacking' take place and how can one possibly date the incident? These questions must be examined together since the answer to the first will provide a reasonable answer to the second question.

The dating of the 'great sacking' has perplexed many contemporary historians, while others avoid any mention of the incident. At all events, there are two basic schools of thought, one supporting the years A.D. 578-585,³³² the other the years 617-619.³³³ The former argue that their dating is the most realistic since it coincides with the great movement of populations, and they cite in part the 'first published' text of the *Miracula*. This records that two years after the events described in the first chapter of Book II, all of Illyricum was devastated and pillaged by the Avars. But in the later incursions, reference is made only to the taking of captives by the Avars, and the subsequent peace treaties between Byzantium and the Avar kingdom naturally include conditions entailing the return of captives. It is, however, very odd that those who support such a chronology agree for the most part that Hadzon led only Slavic tribes who laid siege to Thessaloniki in A.D. 615.

Those who support the years 617-619 argue, according to the text of the second chapter of the second book of the *Miracula*, that the great devastation took place two years after the siege of Thessaloniki by Hadzon. Therefore, since he beleaguered Thessaloniki in 615-616, the great depredation occurred later.

332. Lemerle, *INVASIONS* etc., and his *LA COMPOSITION ET LA CHRONOLOGIE*; Pernice, *SULLA DATO* etc.; Antoniadès-Bibicou, *A PROPOS DE LA PREMIERE MENTION* etc.; Charanis in his earlier monographs. It should be noted that some historians, without specifying a certain date, cite the rebellion of Kouver to infer the same chronology.

333. Those supporting such a date include Barisic, *OP. CIT.*; Laurent, *SUR LA DATE DES EGLISES*, etc.; Charanis *KOUVER* etc. Those implicitly agreeing with the chronology are numerous, and include Ostrogorsky, Diehl, Ahrweiler, Runciman, Zlatarski, Dujcev, and so on.

Yet it is significant that the date 617-619 is based on completely false premises. The year 619 is taken from Theophanes who records that an incursion was made by the Avars at that time, in the 9th year of Heraclius (October 618-619).³³⁴ In one of his monographs, Baynes³³⁵ writes that the *Chronicon Paschale*,³³⁶ a contemporary source, records that the date of the surprise attack against Heraclius in Thrace fell upon a Sunday the 5th of June 623. But such a dating does not agree with that provided by Theophanes and must therefore be rejected. Yet the 5th of June of 619 falls on a Tuesday, and again Baynes argues that one cannot ignore such precise dating in a contemporary chronicle and reject it out of hand in favour of the evidence supplied by a Chronicler who flourished 200 years after the event. In the light of such involved calculation, Baynes concludes that the sudden incursion by the Avars and therefore the ensuing 'great sacking' took place on Sunday the 5th of June in the year.... 617, since Sunday falls on the 5th of June in that year. Such an odd theory whereby a certain chronology is conveniently devised which is not recorded by any contemporary chronicle, rather than being dismissed without second thought, has been unfortunately adopted without further ado by such distinguished Byzantinologists as Amantos, Diehl, Kulakovski, Ostrogorsky, and others. I have dealt with the matter at great length in my earlier volumes.³³⁷ In the light of the situation, many historians who choose not to ignore or challenge those distinguished scholars supporting the date A.D. 617-619, prefer to dismiss out of hand the only explicit chronology provided by the single contemporary and more or less unique authentic chronicle.

To those who disagree with the date 578-585, I would add certain further comments.

A. The Book of Miracles states that the abducted inhabitants were taken to Pannonia of which the main town was formerly

334. Theophanes, pp. 301, 302. The 9th year of Heraclius was also recorded by Cedrenus who uses Theophanes as his primary source.

335. Baynes, *THE DATE OF AVAR SURPRISE*, in *B.Z.*, Vol. 21, 1912.

336. *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. Bonn, I, 712, 713.

337. See Vol. I of the History, pp. 145ff, and especially pp. 361ff.

Sirmium. Sirmium was taken by the Avars and destroyed in 582. And 'formerly' would indicate a good many years before the migrations.

B. After crossing the Danube in 595 or 598, Priscus marched through Pannonia and routed the Avars near the Tisa River. After his great victory, one would expect him to free all the captives who had been brought thither from the Byzantine Empire a few years earlier.

C. The *Miracula* record that the captives came originally from the districts round Thessaloniki, Constantinople and Thrace. According to the *Chronicon Paschale* and the *Chronicle* of the Patriarch Nicephorus,³³⁸ the Avars reached the very suburbs of Constantinople where they took many prisoners and ravaged Thrace. Nicephorus says 270,000 inhabitants were rounded up. George the Monk lowers the figure to 70,000, a more reasonable number, though I believe even this to be exaggerated.

Taking into account these factors, I believe one can with certainty assume that the 'great sacking' occurred in 623.

Having found a satisfactory answer to the first part of the question, the dating of the Mavros and Kouver affair becomes less difficult. The following facts are useful.

Despite his traitorous activity, Mavros was not put to death or even imprisoned. Hence the Mavros incident could not have occurred either in the reign of Constantine (Constans) who was an austere monarch especially where sedition was involved, or in the reign of Justinian II who was particularly vengeful. The moderate and kind ruler who is described in the *Miracula* as 'our very good Emperor' was none other than Constantine IV.

D. The *Miracula* record that these events took place more than 60 years after the 'great sacking'. Of course, one must take the number with a grain of salt. It is to be remembered that the book is hagiographical and was composed to sing the praises of

338. Nicephorus, p. 14. The *Chronicon Paschale*, I, 713, records that 'all the captives were settled in the region beyond the Danube, without any resistance.' Hence, the passage in the *Miracula* describing the transfer of the captives beyond the Danube is substantiated by the *Chronicle* which is contemporary with the events.

the Saint and his miracles and therefore cannot be taken either as a serious chronology or a history.

E. The fleet was not available for operating before 670-679, nor after 692, due to the unceasing wars with the Arabs.

Different historians propose their own dates for the events.³³⁹

Given the information at hand, I have concluded that a certain Kouver, probably a Bulgar, but not necessarily so, the son of Coubrates, king of the Bulgars of the Volga, was appointed leader, perhaps in recognition of services he had rendered, of a large number of people who were descendants of certain inhabitants of the areas of Thessaloniki, Macedonia, Thrace, and Constantinople. They had been abducted by the Avars during the invasion in the early half of A.D. 623. At all events, the incident took place after 650 for it was about that time that the dissolution of the kingdom of Coubrates began. In about 660-670, he rebelled against the Khagan of the Avars, defeated him, then crossed the Danube and under the coercion of his subjects came as far as the Keramesian plain. Thence he sent an embassy to the Emperor (?) asking for permission to settle there as loyal subjects of the Empire and requesting that the nearby Slavonic tribes of Dragubites, who were also subjects of the Emperor, be commanded to supply them with provisions. Then follows the moves and the plot of Mavros as described approximately by the Book of Miracles, and then the arrival in Thessaloniki of the strategos Sisinnius some time after 679-680 with the fleet of the Karabisiani (Caravon).

8. There is no information on the subsequent careers of

339. Diehl, *LE MONDE ORIENTAL*, p. 227, supports 677-680. Lemerle, whom I have already quoted, says 635. Also supporting the same date are Setton, Antoniadès-Bibicou, Gregoire, Tafrali and Pernice. On the other hand Ostrogorsky, *THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE*, etc., Barisic, *OP. CIT.*, Runciman, on the basis of Zlatarski, Chrysanthopoulos, *THE MIRACULA* etc., Charanis in his recent monograph, J. Laurent, Cancova-Petcova, Angelov, Jirecek, Dujcev and others support the years 675-700, or the final quarter of the 7th Century. Burmov believes that the rebellion of Kouver occurred in 660-670, whereas Tafel, *DE THESSALONICA EIUSQUE AGRO*, Leipzig, 1839, thinks these incidents should be placed after 741. I have listed those scholars who have dealt with the subject. There are others with various theories.

Kouver and Mavros. Ahrweiler³⁴⁰ has attempted to show that Kouver succeeded Tervel, Khagan of the Bulgars, who died in 718. Charanis³⁴¹ very properly rejects this very peculiar suggestion which is not based on any source. Besevliev³⁴² has argued, using a proto-Bulgarian inscription which was discovered at Madara in Bulgaria, that Kouver, who was the uncle of Tervel, had established an independent state in Thessaloniki. Later Besevliev modified his contention by claiming that the state was founded in the region of Thessaloniki. Yet the inscription of Madara says nothing of Kouver and reads 'Thiu...m.ou... is Thessa....ki...'. But of the subjects of Kouver, as this is clearly stated in the *Miracula*, the unique source for the incident, initially a large number broke away and left for Thessaloniki whence they were transported by the local authorities to Constantinople. The remainder that had come with Mavros to Thessaloniki were assembled by the strategos Sisinnius who brought them together with Mavros to the capital on the ships which had been sent by the Emperor 'to transport the often mentioned Keramesians'. With what people could Kouver have possibly founded an independent state? Such a view which cites no source cannot be taken seriously. As for Mavros, Charanis argues that the people who accompanied him to Constantinople were finally settled in Thrace with Mavros as their leader. The entire passage in the *Miracula* is rather obscure and without wishing to reject Charanis's view, I am forced to admit that it is not entirely implausible. At all events, after his arrest, no additional information survives concerning Mavros for this particular period.

9. The final question concerns the date of composition of the second book of the *Miracula*. The problem presents some difficulties since Byeus, who initially edited portions of the Book of Miracles, claimed that the author of the second book was anonymous and that he wrote the text in the latter half of the 8th

340. Ahrweiler, *BYZANCE ET LA MER*, p. 30.

341. Charanis, *KOUVER* etc.

342. Besevliev, *ZUR DEUTUNG UND DATIERUNG* usw., and *Ibid*, *ON THE COMPENSATION THAT TERVEL RECEIVED FROM JUSTINIAN II*, in *Viz. Vrem.*, Vol. XVI, 1959.

Century. Tougard, who edited fragments of the *Miracula* but used another source, added a French translation, accepts more or less the same dating and states that the author is unknown. Pernice contended, more vaguely, the second half of the 7th Century. Both Ostrogorsky³⁴³ and Barisic conclude that it was written in the reign of Constantine IV and therefore before 685. Laurent, in dating the Perbundus incident, about which more in the following paragraph, concludes that the second book must have been composed at the close of the 8th Century. In his careful scrutiny of the books of the *Miracula*, Chrysanthopoulos,³⁴⁴ after noting the different views, reaches the conclusion that on the basis of the preface to the fifth siege of Thessaloniki, the author of the second book is none other than John, the Bishop of Thessaloniki, who was present at the Sixth Ecumenical Council. This proeme or preface, which was published in a summary form by Byeus,³⁴⁵ reads 'when the most blessed Father, who in name and in manner and in deeds, was Bishop... our beloved John....'

I support fully such an interpretation. The second book was in all probability written by Bishop John of Thessaloniki some time before A.D. 688 since from an inscription of Justinian II we are informed in that year the Bishop of Thessaloniki was a certain Peter.

I feel it would serve no purpose to deal at greater length with this incident. I have reached certain conclusions after examining in considerable detail the facts at hand and believe the answers to the questions to be the most rational.

3

Chapter four of the second book records that peace reigned with the Slavs who dwelt near Thessaloniki. The governor of

343. Pernice, *SULLA DATO* etc.; Ostrogorsky, *THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE* etc.

344. Chrysanthopoulos, *THE BOOKS OF THE MIRACLES OF ST. DEMETRIUS* etc., pp. 50f.

345. Migne, P.G., Vol. 116, p. 1323, and fn. 16 of Byeus, reprint from the *Acta SS Bollandiana*, Vol. IV (October).

Thessaloniki was informed that Perbundus, Chieftain of the Rynchiniens³⁴⁶ had planned to move against the city. He hastened to make known this intelligence to the Emperor who ordered his arrest, and that Perbundus be sent in chains to Constantinople. The governor then apprehended Perbundus in Thessaloniki. The Rynchiniens and the Slavic tribes of the Strymon petitioned the governor for his release, for Perbundus was very popular in Thessaloniki as well, which accounts for the fact that a joint embassy made up of the elders of both the city and the Slavs proceeded to Constantinople to intervene with the Emperor for his release. This fact would indicate the friendly relationships existing at the time between Slavs and Greeks. But the Emperor who was in the midst of preparations for war against the Arabs,³⁴⁷ replied to the embassy that he would be released at the end of the war. Perbundus in the meantime was persuaded by some elder to make his escape, and he fled through the Blachernae Gate and went into hiding on an estate of a friend near Bizye.³⁴⁸ But he was captured and was again confined. He attempted a second escape but was apprehended, and in the course of his trial he confessed that he had planned to capture

346. Rynchiniens were a Slavic or Vlacho-Slavic tribe. Tougard points out that very little is known of these people whose name derives from some river near the Strymon. Niederle (p. 106) believes the Rynchiniens occupied parts of the Chalcidike peninsula including Mt. Athos. Zakythinos (p. 31) says they dwelt in the region near Thessaloniki and the name comes from river Rechion (see Procopius, *On The Buildings*, IV, 3, 27). Those who were dispersed among the Vlachs, were known as Vlacho-Rynchiniens. See also Kyriakides, *STUDIES REGARDING THESSALONIKI*, Thessaloniki, 1939, pp. 39, 40. As one can see, the actual identification of the Rynchiniens and where they dwelt is uncertain. I believe that a branch of this tribe inhabited an area outside Thessaloniki, since the text states 'those Sclavinians dwelling nearby....' Another branch which had intermingled with the Vlachs had settled near the gulf of Rentina, since it appears as a piratical tribe of people in another paragraph of the *Miracula* and in other passages.

347. After the arrival of Perbundus in Thessaloniki, there is a considerable gap in the first edition of the *Miracula*. This has been supplemented somewhat by the fragments published by Tougard, pp. 67-91, who maintains that the Emperor was arming for a war that was to endure for over five years.

348. Very ancient and well-fortified town of Thrace, some 130 kilometres northeast of Constantinople.

Thessaloniki. He was summarily condemned and executed.³⁴⁹ It is odd indeed that no one in Thessaloniki should find the presence of a Slav chieftain in the town extraordinary. In the meanwhile, the guards of Perbundus were subjected to torture and 'confessed' the names of his accomplices. His interpreter was arrested, and both he and his wife were put to death.

When news reached the Rynchiniens of the death of Perbundus, they rebelled. The time that intervened between the arrest and the execution of Perbundus is not known, but undoubtedly a few months had elapsed. The Rynchiniens very soon came to an understanding with their neighbours the Strymonites.³⁵⁰ They also persuaded the Drogubites and the Sagoudates to join them, thus uniting the scattered Slavonic tribes³⁵¹ in the neighbourhood of Thessaloniki.

The Emperor who in the meantime may have been informed of the Slavic rebellion and the joining up of their forces, could hardly have any troops to spare and therefore instructed the leaders of the city of Thessaloniki to collect and store ample supplies of food in the event of a probable assault by the Slavs.³⁵²

The Rynchiniens, Strymonites and Sagoudates blocked all entrances to the city and began to besiege it. Soon the Drogubites also took up arms. The latter had available large siege machines and the beleaguerment became more intensified.

349. Lemerle, *INVASIONS ET MIGRATIONS ETC.*; Evert-Kappesova, *RECHERCHES SUR LA COLONISATION SLAVE A BYZANCE*.

350. A Slavic tribe occupying the lower and middle reaches of the Strymon. Niederle, *OP. CIT.*, p. 106; Dvornik, *LES SLAVES, BYZANCE ET ROME*, p. 14.

351. Sagoudates, a Slavonic tribe living in mixed villages with the Greeks west of Thessaloniki and neighbours of the Dragubites. Niederle, *OP. CIT.*; Rambaud, *L'EMPIRE GRECAU X SIECLE*, p. 226; Dvornik, *OP CIT.*, who cites J. Cameniatas, ed. Bonn, to say they were usually subject to Thessaloniki. Zakythinos, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 30, 31; Kyriakides, *STUDIES REGARDING THESSALONIKI*, p. 10. According to Amantos, *Makedonika*, p. 13, and Jirecek, *GESCHICHTE DER SERBEN*, I, 120, probably not Slavs but Vlachs. Kyriakides observes that the name 'Perbundus' is also doubtful as Slavic, p. 39.

352. Tougard, *OP. CIT.*, para. 78, p. 158.

It lasted for about two years. The blockade was by both land and sea where the single-straked vessels of the Drogubites and the light boats of the Strymonites were active. The leaders of the city had unwisely sold much wheat to various ships that had called at the port, and there was much hunger in Thessaloniki and its inhabitants suffered as a result. But at this difficult juncture, there arrived 10 armed transports with a few troops and much food. But these supplies were not enough for the hungry populace, and that is why many inhabitants 'the flower of the citizenry', taking advantage of the fact that sea communications had been restored, embarked on ships and boats, and under the watchful eye of the armed transports sailed to Thessaly where they obtained many supplies of food, mostly from the tribe of the Belegezites.³⁵³ The Slavs now believed this an opportune time to attack in view of the absence of many of its citizens and ships, and so they launched an assault. On the 25th, 26th and 27th of July in the fifth Indiction,³⁵⁴ the Slavs made a concerted attack by land and sea. But the Strymonites, thanks to the miracle of St. Demetrius, retreated after advancing three miles from the sea walls.³⁵⁵ The Slavs succeeded in penetrating through the single north wall, but St. Demetrius, 'pursued them, striking with his staff....'³⁵⁶ and drove them from the city.' Then the Drogubites withdrew and the other Slavs were forced to retreat. But the Strymonites continued to conduct raids and marauding expeditions and reached with their ships as far as Proconnesos in the sea of Marmora.

Then the Emperor ordered his army to make an all-out attack through Thrace against the Slavs and 'not stealthily'. Despite the

353. A Slavic tribe that had colonized the regions of Demetrias and of Thebes. Tougard, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 165, 166; Dvornik, *OP. CIT.*, p. 15; Tafrali, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 122, 123; Lemerle, *INVASIONS* etc.

354. As often pointed out, the 'Indiction' is a cycle of 15 years used for taxation of landed property. The Indiction and the year of reign of the Emperor were compulsory for dating all official documents.

355. Tougard, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 166-168.

356. *Miracula*, in Migne, *P.G.*, Vol. 116, p. 1352.

vigourous resistance of the Slavs, the imperial forces crushed the enemy.³⁵⁷

Such is the narrative as related in the fourth chapter of the *Miracula*. Certain questions come immediately to mind, especially involving the chronology of this sequence of events. But there exist elements in the narrative that provide certain clues which are helpful in determining the approximate dates.

1. In the period before the Slavic attack, the Slavs had already been long settled in these areas. They lived in peaceful cooperation with the native inhabitants and were loyal subjects of Byzantium. So much can be concluded from the fact that they spoke Greek, wore Greek costumes, and that a joint embassy of Slavs and Greek elders of Thessaloniki visited the Emperor to plead for Perbundus. This particular incident therefore took place after the campaign of Constantine III in 658 against the Sclaviniae when these Slavs who had become troublesome to the native population were subjected.

2. The Emperor did not deal in the early states with the problem of Perbundus because he was in the midst of preparations for the major war against the Arabs.

3. In the course of the two-year siege, he was unable to send help to Thessaloniki with the exception of the ten armed ships with very few troops.

4. The assault took place at the end of July in the fifth Indiction which ends on the 31st of August. After the failure of the assault, there began the piratical raids by the Strymonites whom the Byzantines were not in the position to counter-attack immediately, and thus the Slavs sailed as far as the sea of Marmora. This would indicate that the imperial fleet which was stationed at Constantinople could not move with much freedom or was preoccupied with other more pressing operations.

5. The army that marched against the Strymonites was not led by the Emperor, and did not advance as far as Thessaloniki since obviously there was no need to do so.

These are the facts from which one can draw certain conclusions, and especially the fifth Indiction. What year could

357. *Miracula*, OP. CIT., p. 1358.

this have possibly been? A.D. 632 is certainly out of the question, for there existed no Arab threat. A.D. 647? Certainly a long drawn-out war was being fought with the Arabs, but the imperial fleet was not particularly preoccupied with major operations since the Arabs had only then decided to build a fleet, and the latter's naval expeditions began in 649. Perhaps A.D. 662? And yet peace had been made with the Arabs, and Constantine III had departed in 661 from Constantinople, had spent some time in Macedonia and Greece, and in 663 disembarked at Tarantum. In A.D. 677, Constantinople was under siege, as has been described in Chapter II. Is A.D. 692 a possible date? But the assault took place two years after the siege and for a considerable period before this siege, there was peace between the Byzantines and Arabs irrespective of the fact that in A.D. 687-688 Justinian himself had campaigned against the Slavs, reaching as far as Thessaloniki. The year A.D. 706? At that time, the Empire was at war with the Arabs. The year A.D. 782, the fifth Indiction, which was also the year the patricius Stavracious was sent against the Sclavenian nations, has also been proposed as a possible date.³⁵⁸

Various historians have supported the year A.D. 634 proposed by Tafel,³⁵⁹ but such an early date cannot stand, for Heraclius was not in Constantinople, nor was there a war with the Arabs which could in fact have preoccupied the imperial fleet.

Another theory³⁶⁰ contends that the Perbundus affair began in 644, that his death and the siege of Thessaloniki lasted from 645 to 647 when the general assault took place (the fifth Indiction) and that the campaign against the Strymonites

358. J. Laurent, *SUR LA DATE DES EGLISES* etc. If in fact such a date is accepted which in some way fulfils most of the conditions that I have already mentioned, then the author of the second book of the *Miracula* could not possibly be John, the Bishop of Thessaloniki, for he died before 687. So the author would be an anonymous writer who composed this work at the end of the 8th or the early 9th Century.

359. Tafel, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 123, 124.

360. Antoniadès-Bibicou, *A PROPOS DE LA PREMIERE MENTION* etc.; Evert-Kappesowa, *RECHERCHES SUR LA COLONISATION* etc.

occurred in 648-649, or under Constantine III, on the basis of Theophanes in 657-658.³⁶¹ Others again argued that the siege took place in 685-687, and the campaign which subdued the Slavs occurred in 687-688 under the personal leadership of Justinian II.³⁶²

The chronology proposed by Lemerle³⁶³ is, in my opinion, the most rational and it is supported by many historians.

Perbundus was arrested between the years 672 and 674. Those were in fact the years in which the Byzantines were feverishly preparing to repulse the alarming attack of the Arabs which began in 671-672. His execution took place in 674-675, at a time when the Byzantines were preoccupied with the siege or blockade of Constantinople by the enemy. The alliance of the Slavic tribes occurred in 675 when they began to lay siege to Thessaloniki. In the light of the threatening situation, the Emperor could not spare more than a handful of ships for Thessaloniki, and I presume these vessels were detached from the fleet operating in the Aegean and not the Sea of Marmora. The assault took place in July 677 (the 5th Indiction). The piratical raids and plundering expeditions of the Strymonites occurred in 677-678, when the imperial fleet was engaged in operations against the Arabs in the Sea of Marmora, and only after the complete annihilation of the Arab fleet and army, in A.D. 678, Constantine IV sent an army against the Strymonites

361. Diehl, *LE MONDE ORIENTAL*, 216, 217; Burmov, *LES SIEGES DE THESSALONIQUE* etc.

362. Dvornik, *LA VIE DE ST. GREGOIRE* etc., pp. 31-34; Jirecek, *GESCHICHTE DER BULGAREN*, pp. 92, 93; Grégoire, *UN EDIT* etc. who mentions the year 691-692; Zakythinos, *THE SLAVS IN GREECE* etc., pp. 28, 29, who however, wavers between the years 678 and 687.

363. Lemerle, *LA COMPOSITION ET LA CHRONOLOGIE* etc., and his *INVASIONS* etc.; Bury, *A HISTORY* etc., II, 338; Barisic, *LES MIRACLES* etc., p. 151; Breckenridge, *THE LONG SIEGE OF THESSALONIKI*, in *B.Z.*, Vol. 48/1955, who censures those supporting the views of Grégoire; Chrysanthopoulos, *OP. CIT.*, but who argues that one can alter the '5th Indiction' to read the '15th' which coincides with A.D. 687 (pp. 66, 78, 79). But I should like to point out that in the year 685 when the siege began, since the grand assault took place in 687, there was no war between Byzantines and Arabs; Rambaud, *OP. CIT.*, p. 263; Runciman, *OP. CIT.*, p. 20, etc.

who were forced to fight alone since their appeals to the other Slavonic tribes were unheeded. Such, in my opinion, is the only reasonable chronology for this very unusual incident, making the best and maximum use of the extant source, and which incident is recorded uniquely in the Book of Miracles of St. Demetrius.

There is yet another source,³⁶⁴ likewise hagiographical, that places the Perbundus incident at the end of the 9th Century, in the reign of Leo the Wise (A.D. 886-912). But the Slavs had then been subdued completely and thoroughly, had become Christians, and were already Hellenized.

364. John Stavracious, ON THE MIRACLES OF SAINT DEMETRIUS, published by Joachim of Iveron, in *Makedonika*, Vol. 1, Thessaloniki, 1940.

CHAPTER V

THE BULGARS

The identity of the Bulgars remains a mystery on account of the dearth of ancient sources. This has inevitably led contemporary historians to conflicting and contradictory theories regarding their origins.

1

The Hunno-Turkic-Mongolian tribes commonly known as 'Bulgars' first appeared on the stage of Byzantine history in about A.D. 481 when the Emperor Zeno sought their help against the Ostrogoths.³⁶⁵ They were defeated and compelled to withdraw beyond the Danube whence they had come. Thereafter they reappeared as subjects of the Avars, in the reign of Anastasius I (491-518), when in A.D. 515 Vitalian, the strategos of Thrace, rebelled and with the help of the Hunnish and Bulgar tribes occupied Thrace,³⁶⁶ and again in 626 during the siege of Constantinople.³⁶⁷ Subsequently, the name 'Bulgars' occurs in the chronicles of the Patriarch Nicephorus,³⁶⁸ and Theophanes,³⁶⁹ and was the name used by the historians of Byzantium for the tribes who had assumed a more concrete identity in the reign of Constantine IV.

These Bulgars, under various names, often penetrated imperial territory, either alone, or in company with the Slavs, or especially together with the Avars of whom they were

365. John of Antioch, *Chronicle*, ed. K. Müller, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, Vol. IV, p. 619, Paris, 1869-1938.

366. Malalas, *Chronicle*, ed. L. Dindorf, p. 402, Bonn, 1831; Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, I, 108.

367. Pisides, G., *Bellum Avaricum*, vv. 197ff, ed. Pertusi, 1959.

368. Nicephorus, p. 33, 'those known as Huns and Bulgars'.

369. Theophanes, p. 356, 'the Bulgars entered Thrace'.

subjects. It is indeed strange that all these tribes are mentioned by Procopius and his continuator Agathias under different names such as Huns, Onoguri, Utigurs, Cotrigurs, Hunnogundari, Cuturgurs, Scythians and so on. It should be pointed out that although all these tribes were related, they often fought each other, as for example during the reign of Justinian I in A.D. 551, when in an invasion by the Cotrigurs, the Emperor called upon the Utigurs to oppose them.³⁷⁰ The question naturally arises as to the origin of these numerous tribes known as Bulgars, whence they had come, and where they finally settled before entering Byzantine history as one of the most threatening and dreaded foes of the Empire.

In the central uplands of Asia there lived different tribes which contemporary historians describe variously as Hunno-Finnish, Turkic, or Mongolian. The Uralo-Altaic tribes became known subsequently as Huns who admixed with Turkish tribes.³⁷¹ The exact origins of the various hordes that united and came to be known in history as 'Bulgars' is doubtful. Some historians describe them as Hungro-Finnish,³⁷² others as Hunno-Mongolians.³⁷³ But most, including Ostrogorsky, Bréhier, Amantos, Obelensky, Vasiliev, and Nemeth who in fact argues that the Huns and the Bulgars belong linguistically to different branches of the Turkic language, Setton, Lot, Dvornik, Zakythinos, Hrbek, Kadlec, Zlatarski, Moravcsik, Grousset, Besevliev, Angelov, Freher and others, maintain that the Bulgars are Turko-Mongolians. The theory developed by Nemeth and Moravcsik³⁷⁴ is probably the most plausible. This states that they were originally different hordes of nomadic tribes who, under pressure of other hordes, abandoned their

370. Moravcsik, *OP. CIT.*, p. 66.

371. Kadlec, *THE EMPIRE* etc., in *C.M.H.*, IV, old ed., p. 184.

372. Diehl, *LE MONDE ORIENTAL*, p. 218; Amantos, *HISTORY*, I, 331; Bury, *A HISTORY*, II, 331; Miller, *THE RISE* etc., in *C.M.H.*, old ed. IV, 230.

373. Lemerle, *INVASIONS* etc. who describes them as a Hunnic people and in fact a Tartaro-Turkic nation; Niederle, *MANUEL* etc., p. 99, says of Hunnish origin, Turco-tartars; Runciman, *A HISTORY*, p. 13 calls them Hunns; Filov, *DER URSPRUNG*, usw., identifies them as Turanians.

374. Moravcsik, *OP. CIT.*, I, 108.

original dwellings in the region East of the Urals, then later settled within the extensive domain of the Huns who became their masters, and with whom they were in any case closely related. After the dissolution of the empire of Attila, the scattered remnants of these different tribes which were variously known, intermingled and established themselves in different areas. Nemeth believes the word 'Bulgar' to mean mixed, intermingled, or half-breed. At all events one thing is certain: the Byzantine historians used the word 'Hun' hitherto very loosely and generally to denote some twenty various tribes such as the Avars, Bulgars (Cutugars, Utigurs, Onoguri, Hunnogundari, etc.), Cumans, Goths, Hungarians, Sabirs, Turks (generally), Uz, and so on.³⁷⁵ It is a fact that all these tribes are related tribes, but the pure (?) Huns were East Turkic tribes, whereas those known as Bulgars were West Turkic. Kulakovski³⁷⁶ in fact maintains on the basis of an anonymous passage which draws on Theophanes and Nicephorus as sources, that the dynasty of those who ruled, that is to say, the Khans or Khagans of the Bulgars, are descendants of Irnak, son of Attila.

Kyriakides³⁷⁷ on the other hand, proposed a theory to the effect that the word 'Bulgar' derives from another source. He maintains that after the dissolution of the empire of Attila, different Hunno-Tataric tribes settled North of the Danube as *foederatae* of the Byzantines.³⁷⁸ The frontier guards were known usually as 'burgars' from the word 'bürg', signifying a fortified town, and that the word for frontier guards, or Burgars, was eventually corrupted to Bulgars.

The great mass of these tribes inhabited the vast region bounded by the Maeotis lake (Sea of Azov), the river Tanais (Don), the Volga, and the Kama river. The two largest branches of these tribes, the Utigurs or Onogundari and the Cutrugurs or

375. Setton, *THE BULGARS IN THE BALKANS* etc.; Amantos, *OP. CIT.*, I, 331.

376. Kulakovski, *BYZANTINE HISTORY*, Vol. III.

377. Kyriakides, *BULGARS AND SLAVS* etc. See also Vasiliev, *OP. CIT.*, I, 290.

378. Moravcsik, II, 66, maintains that 2000 Cotrigur families were settled by the Byzantines along the Danube River as *Foederatae*.

Cotrigurs soon began to collaborate with or to absorb the various kindred Hunno-Tartaric-Turkic tribes, and by the early 7th Century one encounters the Cotrigurs established in the region of the Don, and the Onogundari to the North and East of the sea of Azov. Under pressure from the Avars, who were also a Hunno-Tartaric-Mongolian race mixed with Turkic elements, the different tribes soon became their subjects, and began to push out the Goths who inhabited the Crimea, then settled along the coast of the Black Sea, whereas further north in alliance with the Avars they fought, expelled or subjected the German tribes that had occupied the lands of the former empire of Attila. Soon thereafter, they resumed their incursions into the wealthy but unprotected imperial territories of Illyricum until the Avars met defeat before the walls of Constantinople in A.D. 626, and the Byzantine recovery of the Balkans put a stop to further raids on the part of the Bulgars. Moreover, the weakening of Avar control and the beginning of the disintegration of their empire accelerated by the revolt of the Slavs of Bohemia under the chieftain Samo, and of the Croats and Serbs whom the Byzantines established as buffer tribes³⁷⁹ between the Empire and the Avars, gave added impetus to the Bulgar desire for independence.

Round the person of the first leader of the Bulgars, that is to say, of all the kindred tribes that made up the Bulgar nation, there has been woven a fanciful story which calls for much careful scrutiny.

According to the list of early Bulgar khans, the first king of the Bulgars was Kurt,³⁸⁰ or Kubrat, Cobratus, Crobatus.³⁸¹ Kurt is the common Turkish name for 'wolf'. Since his son or grandson bore the name Asparuch, Asperuch, or Ispcrikh, which in Turkish signifies '...wolf', it is quite possible that the

379. See Vol. I, Chapt. 22 of this History.

380. Moravcsik, *OP. CIT.*, I, 108; Bury, *THE CHRONOLOGICAL CYCLE OF THE BULGARIANS*; Runciman, *A HISTORY*, etc.; Zlatarski, *OP. CIT.*; Freher, *DIE SPRACHTRESTE* usw.

381. Kubrat, Nicephorus, p. 24, and Cobratus, p. 33. Crobatus, Theophanes, p. 357, Kubrat, John of Nikiu, p. 580. I believe all these names are an attempt to Hellenize the name Kurt.

totem of the dynasty was the wolf.³⁸² At all events, he was a descendant of the ancient and powerful family of Dulo. The Bulgarian lists record that he reigned for 60 years. Some historians maintain that he died in A.D. 642, others say 638, and yet others 648. Zlatarski supports the date 643, Bury 637, Runciman, Obolensky and others 642, and so on.

Yet a slight difficulty arises with such dating. Nicephorus³⁸³ records that before Heraclius set out on his campaign against the Persians, the chieftain of the Huns with other leaders visited Constantinople where they were baptized Christians. I should point out here that the Byzantines used 'Huns' to designate many tribes. In this particular instance, therefore, one cannot be sure which 'Huns' are intended. In another passage,³⁸⁴ before the Arab attack began, Nicephorus writes about Kubrat, nephew of Organa, chieftain of the Hunnogunduri. John of Nikiu³⁸⁵ records that Kubrat, chieftain of the Huns, and nephew of Organa, was baptized as a young man and grew up in the palace, and this accounts for his great affection for Heraclius, and the imperial family. John of Nikiu therefore confirms the narrative of Nicephorus.

But these statements are not in accord with the lists of Bulgar khans. If in fact Organas was chieftain of the Huns who went to Constantinople and was christened, this should have occurred in about A.D. 619,³⁸⁶ and since Kurt appears as the khan of the Bulgars between 578 and 593, he would have been in A.D. 619 at least 26 years of age, and not a child. Runciman attempts to fill the gap by claiming that his uncle Organas acted as regent since Kubrat was only a child when he assumed the throne. Yet irrespective of the fact that a person 26 years of age cannot be deemed as very young and could not still be under guardianship, both John of Nikiu and Nicephorus describe not Kubrat but Organas as Hunnish chieftain. And therefore, either Kubrat

382. Freher, OP. CIT.

383. Nicephorus, p. 12.

384. Nicephorus, p. 24.

385. John Nikiu, ed. Zottenberg, p. 580.

386. Moravcsik, OP. CIT.; Runciman, OP. CIT., p. 14.

grew up in the palace and hence could not have begun his reign in the years recorded in the Bulgar lists, or John of Nikiu and Nicephorus wrongly record these particular events. It should be noted that John of Nikiu was a contemporary of the events and the Bulgar lists were compiled much later. One could propose, to get over this difficulty, that Organas whom the sources mention as chieftain of the Huns and Kubrat, who is cited as chieftain of the Hunnogunduri, are two entirely unrelated persons. But independently of the fact that all these Mongol-Tartaric tribes, under whatever names the Byzantines may have used to describe them, are kindred tribes, the chronology simply does not fall into place. Admittedly, no matter from what aspect one approaches the matter, no satisfactory solution can be found. And therefore, the subject continues to remain unsolved and open to further conjecture.

Another problem concerns the identity of the Bulgars who took part in the assault against Constantinople in 626.³⁸⁷ As has been pointed out elsewhere, the various tribes had begun one to subject the other, and occupied the region between the Sea of Azov and the Don, as described by the sources, and as accepted by most contemporary historians. The Huns of Organas and the Hunnogunduri of Kubrat were friends and allies of Byzantium. Now, one could well assume that those in the assault against the capital were Cotrigurs who had occupied the area west of the Don and were subjects of the Avars.

Very probably after the failure of the attack against Constantinople and the harsh treatment given by the Avars to the various Hunnic tribes which had been inducted for the campaign, and whom the khan of the Avars often massacred, Kubrat succeeded in uniting the kindred tribes including the Cotrigurs. In 634-635 he rebelled against the Avars and finally succeeded in expelling them from 'their own land'.³⁸⁸

Kubrat then sent an embassy to Heraclius to ask for an

387. G. Pisides, *BELLUM AVARICUM*, ed. Pertusi, vv. 197-199, and 409; Theophanes, p. 315; Moravcsik, *OP. CIT.*, I, 108; Barisik, in *Byz.*, Vol. 24, *LE SIEGE DE CONSTANTINOPLE* etc.

388. Nicephorus, p. 24, but who does not define 'their own land'.

alliance and I presume, imperial protection. Heraclius, who was then in Syria, sent him many gifts and bestowed upon him the title of patricius. Thereafter he founded a large and powerful state to which the Cotrigurs were also subject.³⁸⁹ The kingdom extended from the Maeotis lake (Sea of Azov) to the Dneiper, the Volga and the areas north of the Caucasus. The Hunnogunduri, Utigurs, Cotrigurs, Cotragurs, Onogurs, and Ugurs, among others, united to form an unusually powerful state that was able to withstand the encroachments of both the Avars and the Khazar Turks.³⁹⁰

Kubrat or Kurt died some time between A.D. 638 and 648. Both Nicephorus and Theophanes are very specific about the date. Kubrat died 'in the reign of Constantine who perished in the West'. The only Emperor who died at the hands of an assassin in the West was Constantine III (Constans). As pointed out in the previous volume of this History, he was enthroned as co-Emperor in 641 and was sole ruler in 642, hence Kubrat died after A.D. 642. Although most contemporary historians accept the date of his death in 642-643, I would prefer a later year, A.D. 648, on the basis of a Bulgarian list of Bulgar khans.³⁹¹

It is reputed that Kubrat had five sons³⁹² whom he had expressly forbidden to separate after his death (this appears to have been a custom among the nomadic hordes of Asia), and to remain united so that the state could maintain its strength and resist enslavement by other nations.

In this instance, a certain difficulty arises. All the Bulgarian lists include between Kubrat and Asparuch a certain Bezmer

389. Nicephorus, p. 33; Theophanes, p. 357, who writes 'the Hunnogundar Bulgars and Cotragurs', as though the latter were not a pure Bulgarian race. On the other hand, Nicephorus writes, 'and those known as Cotragurs who are their kindred tribes' (i.e. of the Huns and Bulgars).

390. Moravcsik, *OP. CIT.*; Runciman, *OP. CIT.*; Zlatarski, *OP. CIT.*; Obolensky, *OP. CIT.*; Ostrogorsky, *OP. CIT.*; p. 124; Bury, *OP. CIT.*, II, 333; Ostrogorsky, *BYZANTIUM IN THE 7TH CENTURY*, pp. 16ff.

391. Nichols, *DIE FÜRSTENLISTE* usw.

392. Nicephorus, p. 33; Theophanes, p. 357; Runciman, *OP. CIT.*; Zlatarski, *OP. CIT.*

who is mentioned as having reigned about three years.³⁹³ In which case, the heirs were not sons but grandsons of Kubrat. But this conflicts completely with the narratives of Nicephorus and Theophanes.

Not long afterwards, the five brothers each went his own way. Certainly the narrative has the makings of a romantic tale, but Armenian sources accredited to Ananias Shirak,³⁹⁴ a contemporary of the events, substantiate to a certain extent the Byzantine sources. At all events, the Byzantine sources relate that when the five brothers separated, the oldest known as Vaianos (Nicephorus) or Vatvaian, obeying the behest of his late father, remained in the land of his forebears even 'to this day'.³⁹⁵ Some historians accept the identification of Vaianos or Vatvaian with Bezmer. In time, he was forced to accept in some manner or other domination by the Khazar Turks to whom he became a tributary. As Theophanes also records, the Khazars dominated the opposite extremity of the Euxine Sea. It is very possible that the dissolution of the vast dominion of Kurt was due to the pressure of the Khazars, which dissolution was undoubtedly hastened by the dissension among the brothers.

The second son known as Cotrugur, probably because he was chieftain of the Cotrugur tribes, 'crossed the Tanais' (the river Don) and occupied the area between the rivers Kama and Volga. This region eventually became known as Black or Great Bulgaria. Cotrugur had withdrawn to this area to escape the constant and threatening pressures of the Khazars.

The fourth son whose name is not recorded crossed the Danube and entered Pannonia where following the permission of the Avars he settled and became a 'vassal of the local nations', that is, of the Avars. As pointed out in the previous chapter,

393. Nichols, *OP. CIT.*, who in one list writes that Bezmer reigned north of the Danube from 648-651. Bury, *THE CHRONOLOGICAL CYCLE* etc., who says that Bezmer ruled from 637-638 until 640; Runciman, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 16, 17; Zlatarski, *OP. CIT.*

394. Maricq, *NOTE SUR LES SLAVES*; Runciman, *OP. CIT.*; Zlatarski, *OP. CIT.*

395. Nicephorus, p. 34; Theophanes, p. 357. Hence until the time the chronicles were composed, i.e. the beginning of the 9th Century.

many contemporary historians argue that this son was none other than Kouver of the Book of Miracles of St. Demetrius.

The fifth son, whose name likewise has not survived, also entered Pannonia, but later rebelled and fled to the country of the Franks where the king Dagobert³⁹⁶ first permitted the tribe to settle at a place known as Baioarii (?), then ordered their massacre. The survivors fled to Italy. At this point, a certain difficulty arises, for according to the Greek chroniclers the fifth son of Kubrat with his followers proceeded to Ravenna and once they submitted to the Greeks,³⁹⁷ the Exarch established him in the Pentapolis. On the other hand, the Lombard chroniclers³⁹⁸ state that the dux or chieftain of the Bulgars Alzecus entered Italy peacefully and became a vassal of the Lombard King Grimoald. These survivors were finally settled in the Duchy of Beneventum, in areas north of the city of Beneventum where there existed uncultivated estates, as already described in the preceding chapter.³⁹⁹ It is possible that both versions of the story are correct,⁴⁰⁰ and that the fifth son left Pannonia directly for Ravenna, whereas the dux or chieftain Alzecus first went to Dagobert and after the massacre fled to the Lombards who were neighbours of the Franks. It should be noted that the title 'dux' is not Bulgarian. According to the sources, the Bulgars who survived the Frankish massacre numbered no more than 700.

The third son whom the Byzantine chroniclers identify as Asparuch also proceeded to the Danube.

2

Asparuch, Esperich or Isperich was also pressed by the Khazars, and gathered his horde, abandoned the north Caucasus, passed across the Danapris (Dneiper) river and the

396. Fredegaire, *CHRONICARUM*, in M.G.H., *Scriptores Merovingicarum*, Vol. II.

397. Nicephorus, p. 34; Theophanes, p. 357.

398. Pauli Diaconis, *HISTORIA LANGOBARDORUM*, V, 29.

399. Hartmann, *GESCHICHTE ITALIENS* usw., II, 1, p. 252; Hodgkin, *ITALY* etc., VI, 284; Bury, *OP. CIT.*, II, 333.

400. Guillou, *REGIONALISME* etc., pp. 102, 103.

Danastris (Dneister), then 'occupied the area Oglos north of the river, between the two mouths of the Danube in the delta area wherein he settled, for it was secure and most difficult of access on either side, because it was marshy there and in the surrounding branches of the river, and provided many conveniences....'⁴⁰¹ Nicephorus gives approximately the same narrative adding 'an ideal site for settlement, known in their tongue as Oglos'.⁴⁰² The two passages are somewhat confusing geographically, for on the basis of these, 'Oglos' is an area. What relationship can this area have with that 'north of the Danube river'? Besevliev⁴⁰³ correctly alters the text saying that 'the north' refers not to the Oglos but to the Danube river. The Bulgars, according to this correction, did not cross the Danube, but remained in the region between the Dneister and the Danube.

In the light of these facts, three questions arise: when did they take place, what was the strength of the horde led by Asparuch, and the identity of 'Oglos'?

No Greek source mentions the date of this settlement. There exists a single reference⁴⁰⁴ which is neither contemporary nor very trustworthy citing the year 669. As a starting point for the chronology, one could take the death of Kubrat which occurred in the reign of Constantine III, and therefore after 642. Some time must have elapsed for the rupture between the brothers, for the accentuation of this rupture due to the pressure of the Khazars and so on, and the departure of each brother for the areas they had selected. A list of the Bulgar kings records that Isperich reigned north of the Danube from 651 to 681. A.D. 651 could well be the date when he assumed the leadership of the Bulgars while still in the Caucasus. In this light, I believe that Asparuch migrated round about 660. Certainly each contemporary historian supports his own chronology, although this be based, as much as my own, on surmise and not on any

401. Theophanes, pp. 357, 358.

402. Nicephorus, p. 34.

403. Besevliev, *ZUR CHRONOGRAPHIE DES THEOPHANES*.

404. *CHRONICON CAVENSE IN MURATORI, Rerum Italicarum, Scriptores, Vol. VII, Milan, 1725, p. 918.*

concrete evidence.⁴⁰⁵ At all events, it is certain, in accordance with the sources, that they didn't cross the Danube at the time.

Concerning the size of the horde, here again is no source available which would provide some hint of the numbers who migrated. It is true that the tribes hereinafter known as Bulgarian, were not as numerous. A large segment of the population stayed in their homeland with the senior brother. One would expect that he kept a large number of tribes under his rule although they were to become finally subjects of the Khazars. The second son Cutrugur founded the extensive kingdom of Greater Bulgaria with the Cotrugur tribes. He, too, would have a large number of followers, for he was able to withstand the pressures from other tribes and retained his independence. The fourth and fifth sons also had some followers. Thus the horde of Asparuch would be small in size. I would agree therefore with Zlatarski and Dujcev who estimate that the Bulgars were no more than 20,000 in number.⁴⁰⁶ Others, however, claim that a large horde of migrants was involved.⁴⁰⁷ But in view of the fact that they all settled in a single armed camp, I would reject the latter argument.

The question causing much controversy and argument is the identity of 'Oglos'. Normally there should be no problem in view of the fact that the sole sources, Theophanes and Nicephorus, both place Oglos between the Danube and the Dniester.

405. Ostrogorsky, *A HISTORY etc.*, p. 125. The same date is supported by Niederle, *OP. CIT.*, I, p. 100. Besevliev, *OP. CIT.*, states that Asparuch began his migration round 660. Runciman, *OP. CIT.*, says between 650 and 670. About the same chronology is accepted by Kulakovsky, *OP. CIT.*, and Angelov, *LA FORMATION DE LA NATIONALITE etc.*, whereas Moravcsik, *OP. CIT.*, argues for the year 659. Vasiliev, *OP. CIT.*, I, 290, believes that the establishment in Bessarabia occurred in the reign of Constantine III (Constans) between 660 and 668. The same date is supported by Zlatarski, *OP. CIT.*, who, however, adds that after Asparuch had settled in Bessarabia with his followers he came to an agreement with Byzantium to guard the frontiers of the region against any barbarian incursion. Vasiliev rightly comments that whether this is a fact is unknown.

406. There is the information supplied by Michael the Syrian that the Bulgars numbered some 10,000, but this information is unreliable. See Marquart, *Osteur. Streifzüge*, p. 434.

407. Ostrogorsky, *OP. CIT.*, p. 125; Runciman, *OP. CIT.*, p. 26.

Wrongly have Bury⁴⁰⁸ as well as Zlatarski and Freher⁴⁰⁹ argued that initially Asparuch had dwelt in Bessarabia but soon crossed the Danube and settled on the west bank of the river at Nicolitsel, near the once strongly fortified town of Noviodunum in what is today Isaccea. This conflicts with the sources which specifically state that the Bulgars crossed the Danube after the headlong flight of the imperial army in 679-680.⁴¹⁰ One should rely upon the extant sources to some extent especially when these are quite clear, and not rely too heavily upon the fancy of the different scholars.⁴¹¹

Most historians agree that Oglos was a fortified site in the Danube delta. Vasiliev, Maricq and Runciman say probably on the island of Peuce as Zlatarski initially proposed. The entire matter was cleared up by Banescu and Freher⁴¹² who argue that Oglos signifies 'corner' or 'angle', that is, the settlement was surrounded on two sides by large rivers. Freher in fact maintains that the Bulgars, like the Huns and Avars, were accustomed to fortifying the site on which they settled, and that 'Oglos' probably originates from the Turkic 'agiul' which in modern Bulgarian has assumed the form 'ohiul'. One could find similarities between such fortifications and the 'Ring' of the Huns and Avars.

But enough on the matter. I believe that on the basis of the extant sources, one could safely assume the Bulgars established themselves somewhere between the Dniester which protected them from the Khazars, and the Danube which formed a barrier with the Byzantines, and that they strongly fortified their encampment before which the imperial forces were halted.

408. Bury, *THE CHRONOLOGICAL CYCLE* etc.

409. Freher, *DENKMÄLER DER KULTUR* usw.

410. This is moreover accepted by Jirecek, Besevliev, and others.

411. The sources are very clear on the matter. Theophanes on whom all contemporary historians rely and especially those who make such odd claims, says on p. 358, that when the Emperor Constantine had been informed.... he encamped on the opposite bank of the Danube, that is to say, in the area north of that river. How can one accept the strange theory that the Bulgars crossed the Danube and that 'Oglos' was situated to the south of that river?

412. Banescu, *OGLOS-UGLU* etc.; Freher, *OP. CIT.*

Theophanes continues with the narrative to record that when the Emperor Constantine had received intelligence that suddenly 'an unclean and foul race had established camp beyond the Danube in Oglos', that they were looting the area round the Danube, or in his words, 'the lands now occupied by them which were formerly in the hands of Christians....', he ordered all the 'themes'⁴¹³ to come to Thrace and armed a fleet to move against them. He arrayed the infantry between the Danube and Oglos and anchored the ships along the coast nearby. When the Bulgars sighted the imperial army they withdrew to their said encampment (I presume Oglos), not daring to emerge. But after three or four days when they observed that the Byzantines did not fight, 'reflecting... upon the enervation of the Romans', or, as Zonaras writes, 'the moderation of the Romans', they took heart and became aggressive. The Emperor in the meantime had an attack of gout (or possibly arthritis) and left for the mineral baths of Mesembria. He had given instructions to his generals and army to attempt to lure the Bulgars from their fortifications so as to give battle. Now, when the cavalry noticed the departure of the Emperor, they were seized with panic and fled 'with no one in pursuit'. Such, in brief, is the description given by Theophanes and other Greek chroniclers who with few variations record the same story.

Several questions arise in this instance regarding the areas which suffered the raids of the Bulgars, the departure of the Emperor from the scene of the battle, and the chronology of these events.

There is no doubt that the looted villages this side of the Danube river were Byzantine. Apparently, Asparuch and the Bulgars who hitherto had maintained peaceful relations with the Empire took advantage of the fierce Byzantine-Arab conflict in 672-677 or 678 to cross the Danube in force and to plunder the villages in Lesser Scythia (Dobrutsa) and Moesia. This was one

413. The term 'theme' in this context has the meaning of military units and not administrative areas.

way of obtaining supplies of food since the Bulgars were not cultivators of the soil.⁴¹⁴ But for such raids to take place would indicate that the territory in question was part of the imperial domain. Consequently, those historians who maintain that Asparuch had seized Dobrutsa before the battle with the imperial forces or that the area between the Danube and the Balkan range had been occupied by Slavic tribes, fall wide of the mark. The sources are, after all, very explicit. Theophanes says 'lands held by the Christians'.⁴¹⁵ Nicephorus relates 'the villages administered by the Romans were invaded'⁴¹⁶ for the purpose of plunder'.⁴¹⁷ Zonaras speaks of the pillage of the areas round the Istros.⁴¹⁸ Sources relating otherwise simply do not exist. Hence the area that was plundered by the Bulgars was imperial territory and the inhabitants were Christian subjects of the empire. I should point out at this stage of history that the Slavs, with very few exceptions, had not yet embraced Christianity. And lastly, I repeat that these were incursions which the Byzantines at this particular time could not deal with effectively, and that no settlement south of the Danube had occurred, as some historians maintain.⁴¹⁹

Now, how can one account for the sudden departure of Constantine? The official version gives as a reason his illness. But can this be a reasonable excuse or does it cloak some blunder on the part of the Emperor? The chroniclers who provide the source wrote some considerable time after the event. There are no contemporary sources. The chronicles were compiled by ecclesiastics who supported Constantine, for he had restored the 'Orthodox faith' and reunited the Eastern and Western churches. It is true they had available contemporary or nearly contemporary sources to consult, but this does not signify that they could not alter the historical facts. Kulakovski maintains that the long siege of the well-fortified encampment of the

414. Iorga, *NOTES D'UN HISTORIEN*; Zlatarski, *OP. CIT.*

415. Theophanes, p. 358.

416. The verb 'katatheo' means make an incursion, invade.

417. Nicephorus, p. 34.

418. Zonaras, III, 319, 320.

419. Obolensky, *THE BYZANTINE COMMONWEALTH*, p. 63.

Bulgars may have caused some impatience and disenchantment on the part of the army and especially aggravated the Emperor's illness. Yet the chroniclers are specific. The siege lasted three or four days. Can one, however, reasonably assume that an Emperor at the head of an army and fleet, would abandon his military forces because of gout, an ailment commonly encountered among the people of Constantinople?⁴²⁰ It is true that Constantine was never militarily inclined, nor did he in the course of his reign participate in a single battle. Trifonov⁴²¹ has maintained that Constantine was anxious to return to the capital to terminate the Sixth Ecumenical Council which had been dragging on interminably. And that the army did not panic at the departure of the Emperor because understandably enough the generals and officers had remained at their posts, but the regiments of troops for the most part came from Asia Minor and were supporters of the Monothelitic dogma. They had wished to march on Constantinople when they learned of the decisions taken by the Ecumenical Council. Mutaftchiev⁴²² also supports such a contention. Other historians argue that the Emperor wished to preside over the opening discussions of the Council. There is entered in the records of the Council a speech delivered by Constantine, presbyter of the bishopric of Apameia of Syria, at the 16th session of the Council which met on the 9th August 681, in which he says 'had my advice been taken, that which we have suffered this year, in the war against the Bulgars would have been avoided, for he had from the very beginning wished to attend the Synod and request.....'⁴²³ The ensuing mutiny of the army of the East, the punishment of the ringleaders, and the deposition of the brothers of the Emperor substantiate such an interpretation.

The chronology of these events also presents some difficulty. Theophanes says in the year of the Creation 6172 (A.D. 679-680) or according to Brooks's correction,⁴²⁴ one year later,

420. Theophylactus Simocattus, *HISTORY*, ed. De Boor, VIII, 9.

421. Trifonov, *DIE NACHRICHT* usw.

422. Mutaftchiev, in *B.Z.*, Vol. 32/1932.

423. *MANSI*, XI, 617.

424. Brooks, *THE CHRONOLOGY OF THEOPHANES*.

i.e. 680-681, and for this year Theophanes goes on to describe the general story of the Bulgars. It is true that all the events he describes for one year did not take place in that year. He also places the Sixth Ecumenical Council, which began in A.D. 680 in the same year. Each contemporary historian supports his own chronology.⁴²⁵ To reach some reasonable conclusion, one must bear in mind that as long as the Arab menace existed, the Byzantines could not spare either army or fleet to strike the foe described as an 'unclean and foul race'. This would require a redeployment of the military forces, and only after more raids and pillage and the protests of the inhabitants of the area concerned had grown more intense would the necessary moves be made to meet the new threat. In excavations conducted in the area of Constantza, numerous coins of Constantine IV⁴²⁶ dated 680 were uncovered. Consequently one can assume that until that date at least the Bulgars had not yet crossed the Danube. On the evidence at hand, I have concluded that the expedition of the Byzantines took place at the end of 680 and the dissolution of the imperial army occurred in the first half of A.D. 681.

4

Continuing his narrative, Theophanes proceeds to say that when the Bulgars beheld the flight of the Romans,⁴²⁷ they 'followed in hot pursuit', slew many, wounded others, and hounded them as far as the Danube 'then crossing the river they came to the area known as Varna, near Odessa.... and noted the country and the security....' which it offered. Behind them was the mighty Danube, before them and on their flanks lay the easily defended mountain passes and to the left was the Euxine Sea. Theophanes then goes on to say the Bulgars subdued the neighbouring Sklavinian nations 'those known as the seven

425. Ostrogorsky, *OP. CIT.*, p. 113; Obolensky, *THE EMPIRE etc.*, IV, 484; Besevliev and others support A.D. 680. Mutavciev, Trifonov, Kulakovksi, Dujcev and Setton, 680-681. Jirecek, Vasiliev, etc. say 679.

426. Barnea, J., *SCEAUX DES EMPEREURS etc.*

427. Or as Zonaras, III, 319, 320, writes, 'realizing the softness of the Romans'.

tribes, they moved the Severians from the Beregada passes to parts of the East, and the remaining seven tribes⁴²⁸ to the South and the West, all paying a tribute tax to them'. Soon thereafter they became 'arrogant' and began to occupy 'those fortresses belonging to the Empire and to take the inhabitants captives. Thus the Emperor was forced to seek peace and to pay an annual tribute to the disgrace and shame of the Romans for their many faults'. Theophanes concludes, 'It is indeed remarkable to hear from far and wide that the Empire subdued every one... but was defeated now by an abominable race of upstarts'. I have relied mostly on the Theophanes text since it contains more details, although generally all Byzantine chroniclers relate nearly the same incidents.⁴²⁹ It is worth noting that not a single Bulgar or Slavic chronicle, nor any other Eastern source, describes these details or deals even superficially with the events. One is therefore compelled to rely exclusively upon the Byzantine sources.

This narration of events contains many unanswered questions, but especially makes necessary the modification or qualification of views on the part of scholars who either have misinterpreted the events as described in the sources or have tended in some cases to distort the events, without intending to, of what had taken place in this period.

The sources leave no room for doubt that the Bulgars crossed the Danube for the first time no longer for plunder but on the heels of the fleeing imperial army. And in fact, it is universally accepted today that the Byzantines suffered a surprise attack by the Bulgars when the imperial force had crossed the Danube, and it was on the further bank that they suffered great harm. The Bulgars, without meeting any significant opposition, occupied

428. There is some confusion in the text. Whereas initially he speaks of 'those known as the seven tribes, the Severians etc.', Theophanes in the same breath mentions the remaining seven tribes. Could these races have been eight in number?

429. Nicephorus, p. 35, who says that the Bulgars later pillaged the villages of Thrace; Zonaras, III, 319, 320; George the Monk, p. 729, who adds that 'ever since they conquered the land of the Christians'; Cedrenus mentions the 10th year of Constantine IV, or 678-679.

Lesser Scythia (Dobrutsa) and reached as far as Odessa, at what is now Varna, which they occupied.⁴³⁰ Gradually they spread as far as Lower Moesia which they also succeeded in conquering. Some contemporary Slavophone historians maintain that this entire region had been completely Slavicized.⁴³¹

The inhabitants of Moesia were a mixed race of people. In addition to the ancient Thracians, the descendants of the Roman colonists in the Danube basin, and the Greeks who dwelt for the most part along the Black Sea coasts, there existed various Slavic tribes, subject to the Byzantines, who were slowly becoming Christianized and Hellenized. At that time, nearly the entire population was either Greek or Hellenized.⁴³² The Slavs of Moesia led a tranquil existence in the valleys and plain and seldom came into contact with the inhabitants of cities or towns. That the region was purely Byzantine is also stated by the chronicler George the Monk (p. 729) who relates that the Bulgars conquered the land 'of the Christians'. It is possible that there existed a more dense settlement of Slavs near Varna, but this is only a supposition since no source says as much. Nor does any source whatsoever record that the region had been Slavicized. These are but the arbitrary conclusions of contemporary historians.

It has been suggested that the Slavs welcomed the Bulgars as liberators and hastened to become their allies.⁴³³ But such argument conflicts with the sources which speak of the subjugation of the Slavs. It is possible that the tribe of Severians had become willing subjects and joined the Bulgars in their

430. Kulakovski, *OP. CIT.*, III, 249ff; Dujcev, *DIE ROLLE* usw.

431. Ostrogorsky, *A HISTORY* etc., p. 126; Obolensky, *THE BYZANTINE COMMONWEALTH*, pp. 63f. Dujcev, *LES SEPT TRIBUS* etc., argues that the Slavic population was so numerous that Slav place-names became the custom. But the city was known as Odessa, an ancient colony of Miletus. The name was changed to Varna only after its capture by the Bulgars, at the end of the 7th or the early 8th Century.

432. Jorga, *NOTES D'UN HISTORIEN* etc.; Besevliev, *LES INSCRIPTIONS PROTOBULGARES*; Filov, *DER URSPRUNG* usw.

433. Ostrogorsky, *OP. CIT.*, p. 126; Jirecek, *GESCHICHTE DER BULGAREN*, p. 130; Niederle, *MANUEL* etc., I, 100; Dvornik, *LES SLAVES* etc., p. 9.

subsequent campaigns. But the other Slavic tribes, as both Nicephorus and Theophanes clearly state, were subdued by military might⁴³⁴ and became liable to the tribute tax. The expression 'being under pacta' is correctly interpreted by Dujcev⁴³⁵ to mean they were subject to the tribute tax.

Asparuch was an able organizer. He straightway transferred the Seven tribes from the mountain pass of Beregada to the Haemus on the eastern slopes leading down to the coast of the Black Sea and to the strategic eastern passes of that range to bar any possible Byzantine attack.⁴³⁶ Other tribes of Slavs he moved to the western approaches to hold the defiles against the Avars with whom they were separated by the middle Danube. All these Slavs were impressed into his military organization and he used them as auxiliaries for the Bulgar horde.⁴³⁷ For them he provided a certain identity which they had lacked, for as in the case of all the Turko-Mongolian tribes, the Bulgars were convinced of the usefulness of a centralized state in a kind of bureaucratic administration,⁴³⁸ which knowledge they had acquired from their former masters the Chinese.

Once Asparuch had laid the foundations for his state, he next crossed the Haemus and began plundering incursions into Thrace.⁴³⁹ There appears to have been no defensive response whatsoever on the part of the imperial army. I am at a loss to explain such inactivity. An army certainly existed, since peace reigned universally. The only possible justification is the lack of military aggressiveness on the part of the Emperor who preferred to come to an agreement with the Bulgars in order to

434. Vasiliev, *OP. CIT.*, I, 290; Paparrigopoulos, III, 251; Lemerle, *INVASIONS* etc.; Runciman, *OP. CIT.*, p. 27.

435. Dujcev, *DIE ROLLE DES BULGARISHEN* usw. He rightly disagrees with Zlatarski who maintains that a treaty was involved. Dujcev says 'under pacta' means that they paid a tribute tax.

436. Zlatarski, *OP. CIT.*

437. Vasiliev, *OP. CIT.*, p. 290.

438. I say a kind of bureaucracy since the Bulgars were illiterate. An indication of this lack of the knowledge of writing is provided by the proto-Bulgarian inscriptions which were recorded in Greek. See Besevliev, *LES INSCRIPTIONS PROTOBULGARES*.

439. Nicephorus, p. 35; Bury, *OP. CIT.*, II, 334.

preserve Thrace. In the latter half of A.D. 681,⁴⁴⁰ probably at the end of the year, a pact was made between the Bulgars and the Greeks. The latter recognized the status quo and undertook to pay the Bulgars a yearly tribute, for which the Bulgars in turn would cease plundering the remaining imperial territories. Thus there was established a new nation that spread over the two banks of the Danube and included southern Bessarabia, a part of Wallachia, Lesser Scythia (Dobrutsa) and Lower Moesia as far as the Haemus. It was indeed the first time that the Byzantine Empire recognized the existence of an independent state within the imperial domain.⁴⁴¹ The new nation was henceforth to be known to the Byzantines as 'Bulgaria'.⁴⁴²

Varna was the first capital, and Pliska in south Dobrutsa, near the ancient Marcianopolis,⁴⁴³ served as the subsequent centre. The Bulgars were divided into clans, one of the most influential being that of Dulo. Kurt and his successors were members of this clan.⁴⁴⁴ The state machinery was basically aristocrat-oriented. The Khan was assisted by six boyars or advisers. In the early stages the Bulgars were barbarian in manner and did not use coins but animals as a means of exchange.⁴⁴⁵ They were polygamous and the dress was not unlike that of the Avars.⁴⁴⁶ Initially, the Bulgars and the Slavs each spoke their own language, hence understanding between them was difficult. They were forced to use Greek as the official language of government.⁴⁴⁷ The horde of Asparuch was small in number and

440. Zlatarski, Runciman, Dölger, Paparrigopoulos, Bury and Moravcsik support the years 679-680. On the other hand, Kulakovski, *OP. CIT.*, III, 249, who relies on the records of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, says 681. Such a date is also accepted by Ostrogorsky, Obolensky, Dujcev, Setton, Lemerle, and Nichols who use the lists of the Bulgarian khans, Angelov.

441. Lemerle, *OP. CIT.*, 305; Ostrogorsky, *OP. CIT.*, p. 127.

442. Zlatarski, *OP. CIT.*; Constantine Porphyrogenetus, *De Them.*

443. Founded by Trajan in the early 2nd Century and destroyed by Asparuch. The date of the founding of Priska or Preslav is not known. Bury, *OP. CIT.*, II, 335.

444. Runciman, *OP. CIT.*, p. 11.

445. Bury, *OP. CIT.*, I, 336.

446. Jirecek, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 131, 132.

447. Angelov, *OP. CIT.*

completely barbarian, and this accounts for its early absorption by the more numerous and, because of their intercourse with the Greeks, more civilized Slavs. In time, the Bulgars adopted the Slavic dialect and manner of life. They abandoned their hitherto nomadic existence. But it was not until the 9th Century that there appears a unified Bulgar-Slavic nation.⁴⁴⁸ I shall not dwell upon the peculiar theory recently propounded to the effect that the subjugation by the Bulgars preserved the Slavic nation.⁴⁴⁹ As the Bulgarian list of rulers records, Asparuch reigned for 61 years, but this appears to be an exaggeration. He died in A.D. 700-701.

448. Jirecek, OP. CIT.; Dvornik, LES SLAVES etc., p. 10; Angelov, OP. CIT.

449. Recently Obolensky, in the BYZANTINE COMMONWEALTH, p. 64, has developed the truly remarkable theory that the conquest of the Slavs by the Bulgars was very fortunate since the Slavs preserved their 'national character'. Otherwise, they would have been completely Hellenized as in the case of the Slavs of Greece. I would point out firstly, that the Slavs were tribes and tribes are not nations, hence could not possess a national character. But even more astounding is the claim by the author that he deems preferable that one belong to a barbarian horde rather than a member of a civilized state and in fact a state that was the most civilized in the world at the time.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGIOUS POLICY

Immediately after the removal of the Arab threat, Constantine turned to the religious problems and the dispute between the Eastern and Western churches.⁴⁵⁰

Constantine was not a staunch supporter of the Monothelitic dogma. Personally very pious, of mild disposition and character, always anxious for compromise and peace, he was intent on terminating this division between the two worlds. Following the loss of the Eastern provinces⁴⁵¹ and therefore of the populations of that part of the Empire who believed in absolute monotheism, there were no longer any reasons to support a religious policy that divided and alienated the remaining part of the Empire. With the exception of several provinces in Asia Minor and the official clergy of the Eastern church, the supporters of the Monothelitic doctrine were few in number. And the reaction of the Eastern church arose not so much in its conviction and belief in the righteousness of the dogma as in its fear that any weakening of its position would be interpreted as a defeat and as an admission of the superiority of Rome.

Constantine had never forgotten the support given him by Pope Vitalian in the early period of his reign when the insurrectionists had seized control of Sicily. The Pope had succeeded in maintaining control of the remainder of the Byzantine possessions in Italy and preserving their loyalty to Constantine.⁴⁵² The Emperor had suffered strong pressures from the patriarchs, particularly the Patriarch Theodore and

450. Bury, *OP. CIT.*, II, 314; Bertolini, *ROMA DI FRONTE* etc., p. 367.

451. Ostrogorsky, *OP. CIT.*, p. 127; Bréhier, *VIE ET MORT DE BYZANCE*, p. 65; Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, p. 242.

452. See Chapter I.

from Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch,⁴⁵³ to remove the name of Vitalian from the diptychs of St. Sophia where were recorded the recognized heads of the various patriarchates. And he had adamantly resisted these pressures. But following the death of Vitalian in 672, the papal name was removed from the diptychs.

In the meantime, Reparatus, Archbishop of Ravenna, visited Constantinople and persuaded the Palace to renew the privilege which had been bestowed on the bishopric of Ravenna by Constantine III⁴⁵⁴ by virtue of which Ravenna had become independent of the church of Rome. He also succeeded in eliminating or diminishing the tax payments by the clergy of Ravenna.⁴⁵⁵ When precisely this occurred is not known, but at all events, it was certainly after A.D. 671 when Reparatus became Archbishop of Ravenna and before 677, the year of his death.⁴⁵⁶

Constantine had decided to deal himself with the reconciliation of the two churches despite the strong opposition of the clergy of the church of Constantinople and the unrelenting pressures and protests of the Patriarch Theodore.

1

The following patriarchs and popes occupied the patriarchal and papal thrones respectively in the reign of Constantine.

1. Patriarchs of Constantinople:

Following the death of the Patriarch Peter (October 1, 666) and a period of 6 months and 17 days when the throne remained vacant, Thomas II⁴⁵⁷ was enthroned on 17 April 667. Thomas was patriarch from that date to November 15, 669. Before becoming patriarch he had served as deacon, chartophylax and

453. Héfélé, *HISTOIRE DES CONCILES*, III, 472; Hartmann, *GESCHICHTE ITALIENS* usw., p. 257.

454. See Vol. III of this History, Chapt. XI, para. 1.

455. Agnelli, *LIBER PONTIFICALIS ECCLESIAE RAVENNATIS*, paras. 115 and 116, pp. 354ff. I presume this would refer to the payment for the confirmation of the election and a reduction of the tax payments by the remainder of the clergy. Diehl, *EXARCHAT DE RAVENNE*, p. 272.

456. Agnelli, *OP. CIT.*, p. 355.

457. Grumel, *LES REGESTES* etc., p. 123; Brooks, *ON THE LISTS* etc.; Stefanidou, *CHURCH HISTORY*, p. 247.

skevophylax of the church of St. Sophia. His synodical epistle sent to the Pope at the time was read at the Sixth Ecumenical Council and was deemed Orthodox. But this letter has not survived. Thomas was immediately succeeded by John V (November 669 - 9 August 675) who also had served as syncellus, presbyter and skevophylax of St. Sophia. It appears that his synodical letter sent to Rome was not accepted by Pope Adeodatus, perhaps on the grounds that it did not explicitly condemn Monothelitism. His synodical letter to Macarius read at the Sixth Ecumenical Council was deemed Orthodox.⁴⁵⁸ John was succeeded by Constantine I (2 September 675 - 9 August 677). He served as deacon, skevophylax and steward of St. Sophia.⁴⁵⁹ His synodical letter likewise was not accepted, and the original text is lost, but an identical letter was sent to Macarius, and it, too, was pronounced Orthodox. He in turn was succeeded by Theodore I (September 677 - December 679). Theodore also served as presbyter and syncellus⁴⁶⁰ of St. Sophia. He did not send a synodical letter to the Pope fearing lest it would not be accepted by the latter as in the case of his two predecessors.⁴⁶¹ He was a staunch supporter together with Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch, of the Monothelitic doctrine. Theodore never ceased pressuring the Emperor to cross off the name of Vitalian in the diptychs of St. Sophia. Constantine realized that under the circumstances he could never hope to bring about a reconciliation with Rome, and therefore deposed Theodore in December of 679.⁴⁶² George, who also had been a syncellus and presbyter of St. Sophia, replaced him (December 679 - February 686).⁴⁶³

458. Grumel, *OP. CIT.*, p. 123; Brooks, *OP. CIT.*

459. Nicephorus, *CHRONOGRAPHIA BREVA*, ed. De Boor; Zonaras, III, 319; *SYNOPSIS SATHAS*, p. 113.

460. Syncellus was the highest office of the bishop and often the latter's successor.

461. Héfélé, *HISTOIRE DES CONCILES*, III, 473.

462. Zonaras, III, 319; *SYNOPSIS SATHAS*, p. 113; Bréhier, *LES DERNIERS HERACLIDES*, p. 184; Grumel, *OP. CIT.*, p. 124; Brooks, *OP. CIT.*

463. Nicephorus, *HIST. BREVA*; Brooks, *OP. CIT.*; Bréhier, *OP. CIT.*

II. Patriarchs of Antioch:

After the Patriarch Macedonious, who had been appointed to the throne in A.D. 639, the date of whose death is unknown, Macarius followed as patriarch. But he was deposed in March 681 by the Sixth Ecumenical Council which elected Theophanes in his place. The latter appears at the 14th session of the Synod on April 5, 681. Theophanes had been the abbot of the Greek monastery of Vaia in Sicily. The patriarchs of Antioch resided at Constantinople.

III. Patriarchs of Alexandria:

Cyrus in 642⁴⁶⁴ was succeeded by Peter III who died in A.D. 651. After his death, upon the insistence of the Copts, the Arabs did not allow the election of a new patriarch for some 100 years. This accounts for the fact that the names of a locum tenens alone appear, as for example, that of Peter IV who attended the Sixth Ecumenical Council as a representative of the Alexandrian church.⁴⁶⁵

IV. Patriarchs of Jerusalem:

After the death of Sophronius in March 638, the Arabs here also did not permit the election of a new patriarch.⁴⁶⁶ At the Sixth Ecumenical Council there attended a certain George as legate of Theodore, the locum tenens of the throne of Jerusalem. Hence the patriarchate of Jerusalem was administered by a locum tenens.

V. Popes:

These have been dealt with in Chapter III, paragraph 2.⁴⁶⁷ At all events, the ties between the churches of Rome and Constantinople were disrupted from the time of the death of Vitalian until the years of Agatho and the names of the popes were not in that period entered in the diptychs of the church of St. Sophia.⁴⁶⁸

464. See relevant bibliography in Vol. II, pp. 214, 215.

465. Mansi, XI, 209, 210.

466. Grumel, *LA CHRONOLOGIE*, p. 451; Mansi, *OP. CIT.*

467. L.P., pp. 346-363; Grumel, *LA CHRONOLOGIE*, p. 431; Mann, *THE LIVES OF THE POPES*, pp. 3-63; Caspar, *GESCHICHTE DES PAPSTTUMS*, Vol. II.

468. Héfélé, *OP. CIT.*, p. 472.

When Constantine had made a treaty of peace with the Arabs or when he accepted their proposals for peace, he decided to deal next with the pressing ecclesiastical problem. It would appear that the Patriarch Theodore had not sent a synodical letter to the Pope. It was the custom for the newly elected patriarch of any see to send such letters to leaders of all the other patriarchates. He was asked to write to the Pope, but Theodore either was not anxious for any kind of reconciliation or feared that his letter would not be favourably received, and therefore adamantly refused to do so.⁴⁶⁹ Constantine himself wrote to Pope Donus in which imperial letter he points out among other things that he was very disturbed by the fact that the infidels scoffed at the religious controversies of the Christians and believed they were more interested in attacking and destroying each other than in facing the attacks of their enemies.⁴⁷⁰ Moreover, that he had intended to communicate with him much earlier but was unable to do so on account of the war which also had delayed the summoning of an ecumenical council.⁴⁷¹ He requested that the Pope send at least three delegates, bishops of the synod (I presume of the Roman synod) and as many as twelve representatives as well as the abbots of the four Byzantine monasteries of Italy and Sicily. He made known to the Pope that he had given instructions to Theodore, Exarch of Italy, to extend all possible help to his legates in ships and money and in cases of necessity to provide them with 'castellatus ships... for their safety'.⁴⁷² The Latin text of the letter has as date the 12th of

469. Grumel, *LES ACTES DES PATRIARCHES*, p. 124. Grumel insists that the Patriarch Theodore used such an excuse, but also argues that Theodore had sent a solicitous letter to Donus which has been lost, and cites Mansi, XI, 196, 197, to support this contention.

470. Migne, P.L., Vol. 8, 1349 Dölger, and f.; Diehl, *LE MONDE ORIENTAL*, p. 242.

471. Brooks in C.M.H., II, 404; Duchêsne, *L'EGLISE AU VIe SIECLE*, p. 462; Bréhier, *LES DERNIERS HERACLIDES*, p. 184.

472. Mansi, XI, 196-201; Migne, P.L., Vol. 87. The 'castellatus' ships were the large warships that carried a tower on the deck.

August 678.⁴⁷³ But this gives rise to a question. Donus died on the 11th of April 678, the election of Agatho took place immediately thereafter, and his name was sent to Constantinople for approval. The election was approved and Agatho was anointed as Pope on July 27, 678,⁴⁷⁴ that is to say, 2 1/2 months after the death of Donus. By what modicum of reason would Constantine's letter of 12 August 678 be addressed to Donus and not to Agatho? Although I have studied the matter at length, I cannot find a logical answer to this discrepancy. A reasonable explanation would be that since this information is based exclusively on the Latin sources which were copied the one from the other, the original text may have been miscopied by a subsequent scribe, unless of course the date which is recorded in only the Latin text is erroneous and the letter had been written before intelligence of the death of Pope Donus had reached Constantinople.

The letter bearing the signatures of the Emperor Constantine and his two co-Emperor brothers Heraclius and Tiberius was delivered to Pope Agatho by the 'renowned secretary Epiphanius'. Agatho was in no hurry to reply. It appears that the epistle was treated as a solicitous or exploratory letter to fathom the thoughts of the Pope and not as a proposal to summon a council.⁴⁷⁵ The aim of the letter was to instigate discussions between the representatives of the two churches on matters of conflict and disagreement.⁴⁷⁶ The delay in Agatho's reply provided an added opportunity for the further coercion of Constantine by the Patriarchs Theodore and Macarius of Antioch.

Agatho had many reasons for delaying his reply. First of all, he wished to obtain the views of all the Western clergy so as to

473. Duchêsne, L.P., p. 355 and fn. 2; Dölger, REGESTEN, usw., No. 244.

474. L.P., I. p. 348; Grumel, LA CHRONOLOGIE, p. 431; Mann, OP. CIT., I, 23.

475. Grumel, REGESTEN etc.; L.P., I, 350ff., and fn. 4.

476. Brooks in C.M.H., II, 404; Bréhier, OP. CIT., p. 184; Duchêsne, OP. CIT., p. 462; Caspar, OP. CIT., p. 587.

avoid any subsequent disagreements.⁴⁷⁷ But there were probably other serious reasons. Agatho feared that the limited learning and inexperience of the Latin clergy would not be enough to confront the highly sophisticated and cultivated clergy of the Eastern church,⁴⁷⁸ for the hierarchy of Constantinople was not only well trained but also of high intellectual ability. This church with its 33 metropolitans, its 350 bishops, not to mention the autocephalous Archbishoprics, presented a well-organized front which contrasted sharply with the church of Rome which appeared as a poorly organized mass of clergymen. Under the circumstances Agatho would have to seek high and low for competent hierarchs. In addition, there was the difficulty of assembling the Western clerics, even for local synods. Bishops lived on their estates which they cultivated.⁴⁷⁹ Agatho finally succeeded in having local synods assembled, such as that of Milan, and of Hedtfield in England presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury. He attempted to persuade the latter to lead the embassy to Constantinople but the Archbishop declined. Finally, at Easter in the year 680, the Pope succeeded in summoning a synod of the Western church over which he presided. Many bishops attended from various parts of the Italian peninsula including areas in the possession of the Lombards, bishops of Dalmatia, and of France including Willifred, Bishop of York.⁴⁸⁰ The Pope himself drafted a text which he submitted and which was signed by all the bishops present at the Roman synod, 125 in number. The Archbishop of Milan and the Archbishop Theodore of Ravenna⁴⁸¹ were among

477. Héfélé, *OP. CIT.*, III, 474; Caspar, *OP. CIT.*, p. 590; Duchêsne, *OP. CIT.*, p. 466.

478. Every, *THE BYZANTINE PARTIARCHATE*, p. 78; Gay, *NOTES SUR LA CRISE* etc.

479. Letter of Agatho in Mansi, XI, 287-290; Guillou, *REGIONALISME* etc., pp. 181, 182. The letter was read at the 4th session of the Sixth Ecumenical Council.

480. Mansi, XI, 185, 186; Jaffé-Wattenbach, *REGESTA PONTIFICUM* usw., p. 288; Brooks, *OP. CIT.*, p. 404; Bréhier, *OP. CIT.*, p. 185; Lambros, *OP. CIT.*, III, 750; Hodgkin, *OP. CIT.*, V, 344; Bury, *OP. CIT.*, II, 315, etc.

481. *L.P.*, p. 355 and fn. 1; Mansi, XI, 185-188; Agnelli, *L.P., ECCLESIAE RAVENNATIS*, para. 124...

those who endorsed the decisions and dogmatic contents of the Synod. It was only following this that the Pope informed Constantinople that his representatives were prepared to come to the imperial capital. Those making up the papal party included the Pope's legates, the presbyters Theodore and George, the deacon John, the subdeacon Constantine (probably the subsequent Pope), and Theodore who represented the church of Ravenna. The representatives of the synod of the Roman church were the bishops John of Porto, John of Rhegium and Abutatus the bishop of Paternus⁴⁸² or Palermo, as well as four abbots of the Byzantine Monasteries of Italy and Sicily. To the legates the Pope gave a personal letter addressed to the Emperor and his brothers Heraclius and Tiberius. The letter was of great length and explained the reasons, among others, why he was so late in replying to the imperial sacra. The letter was dogmatic in content. Also he sent the minutiae of the synod of Rome together with its synodical letter in which was outlined at great length the position of the church of Rome regarding its faith and was endorsed by the 125 bishops. Under no circumstances could the legates modify or change the position of the Roman church as outlined in the letter. Together with these documents was sent a letter drafted by the Archbishop of Milan.

The representatives of the Pope and of the synod, with the assistance of the Exarch of Italy, finally arrived in Constantinople before 10 September 680.⁴⁸³ The Emperor advised that 'not by obstinacy and obsession but by peaceful disposition they define the true faith on the basis of the writings of the Holy Fathers and by synodical decisions'.⁴⁸⁴ The large retinue was accommodated at the palace of Placidia normally used as the residence of the legates of the Pope.

On the day of arrival of the legates, Constantine addressed a

482. LP. I, 350; Mansi, XI, 201-208; Héfélé, III, 477 and f.; Gennadius, HISTORY OF THE PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE, p. 244.

483. The L.P. wrongly records the date of arrival of the embassy as November 10. The opening session of the Council took place on November 7 in the 9th Indiction (680) and the representatives were all present. The observation of Duchêsne, in L.P., I, p. 556, fn. 14, is therefore correct.

484. L.P., I, 351.

sacra (imperial letter) to the Patriarch George who had replaced Theodore, ordering him to summon a synod of his church to which would be invited all the other patriarchs of the Christian churches.⁴⁸⁵ The sacra was dated in September, the 28th year of Constantine's reign and the 12th year of his consulate. Pagi, in his edition of the *Chronicles of Baronius*, rightly corrects this to September of the 27th year of Constantine's reign, for the Emperor was crowned in 654 which, moreover, corresponds with the chronology of the acts of the Council, and in the 12th year of his consulship.

3

The Council began its work on the 7th November 680, in the 27th year of the reign of Constantine, the 13th of his consulship, the 22nd year of the reign of the augusti Heraclius and Tiberius, and the 9th Indiction (September 1, 680 - August 31, 681).⁴⁸⁶ Constantine attended the opening session accompanied by Nicetas, consul and magister of the imperial officia, Theodore, consul, patricius, count of the royal Opsikion⁴⁸⁷ and deputy commander of Thrace, Sergius and Paul, consuls and patricii, Julian, consul and patricius, and the military logothete, Constantine, consul, patricius and curator of the imperial palace of Ormisda,⁴⁸⁸ Anastasius, consul, patricius and lieutenant of the imperial excubitus, John, consul, patricius and quaestor, Poyeuctes, Thomas, Peter, consuls, Paul, consul and governor of the Eastern provinces (?), and Leontius, consul and domesticus of the imperial treasury.

485. Mansi, XI, 201-204.

486. All the acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council are contained in the 11th volume of Mansi, *Consiliarum Amplissima Collectio*. I generally cite this collection.

487. Opsikion initially was the name of an imperial guard before it came to designate an area where many of its men had bivouacked, and eventually became the name of a military and administrative 'theme'.

488. Palace near the harbor of Sophiae. It was built for the brother of Sapor II, King of the Persians. Justinian I resided there before becoming Emperor. It was included in the grounds of the Great Palace and was used as offices (*scrinia*) or as a treasury.

To the left of the Emperor were seated the representatives of the Pope, the representatives of the Archbishop of Ravenna, Basil, Archbishop of Crete who was one of the legates of the Pope for Illyricum which province fell within the jurisdiction of the church of Rome,⁴⁸⁹ and three bishops serving as representatives of the Roman synod. To the Emperor's right sat the Patriarch George, Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch, Peter, locum tenens of the Alexandrian patriarchate, and George, the legate of Theodore, the locum tenens of the patriarchate of Jerusalem.⁴⁹⁰ Next in order sat the metropolitans and bishops of the patriarchate of Constantinople. According to one source, at the first session there were present a total of 43 bishops in addition to the prelates named above. In accordance with the acta contained in Mansi, 12 senior and 51 other priests and hierarchs were in attendance. The source citing a total of 43 bishops besides the officials is therefore incorrect.⁴⁹¹ John, the Archbishop of Thessaloniki, appeared for the 10th session and was present until the end. At the 14th session there arrived as representative of Archbishop Epiphanius of Cyprus Theodore, Bishop of Tremithus, and as representatives of the church of Cyprus⁴⁹² Tychon, Bishop of Kitium and Stratonicus, Bishop of Soli (Solias). They also remained until the end of the Council. In the 16th session and thereafter there attended from former Greece John, Bishop of Athens, Theodosius, Bishop of Lacedaemon, John, Bishop of Argos, and finally, beginning with the 18th session, the Archbishop of Corinth and Greece Stephen⁴⁹³ and Patricius, Bishop of Magnesia. There took place in all 18 sessions. In the first six were read the minutiae and the

489. Illyricum was under the jurisdiction of the church of Rome. The vicar of the Pope was the Archbishop of Thessaloniki and his legates were the Archbishop of Corinth and Greece and the Archbishop of Crete. It is for this reason that the Archbishops of Illyricum, 6 Pope legates, sat next to the representatives of the pope ahead of the representatives of the Roman Synod.

490. Mansi, XI, 209 and f.

491. Bréhier, *LES DERNIERS HERACLIDES*, V, 187; Caspar, *OP. CIT.*, p. 598.

492. Mansi, XI, 583-602 and 611-622; Van den Ven, *LA LEGENDE DE ST. SPYRIDON*, pp. 90ff.

493. Mansi, XI, 623ff.; Le Quien, *ORIENS CHRISTIANUS*, II, 1611 and f.

canons of the last three Councils as well as the text of the Fathers who had been submitted by the Monothelites. During the 7th session (12 February 681) the representatives of the Pope read to the Council the confession of faith which had been drafted by Pope Agatho. In the 8th session (March 7) the Patriarch George endorsed the credo of Agatho, as did the bishops of his see. But Macarius and his followers persisted with the Monothelitic dogma. Following this, his pallium⁴⁹⁴ was removed by Basil, Archbishop of Crete.⁴⁹⁵ The discussion continued until finally at the 12th session Macarius was dethroned and ejected from the Council together with his disciples. In his place was appointed Theophanes, abbot of the Greek monastery of Vaia in Sicily who had appeared at the 14th session of the Council as Patriarch of Antioch (5 April 681).

At the 12th session (March 22) was read the correspondence of Honorius and Sergius, and at the ensuing meeting (March 28) it was decided that there be crossed off from the diptychs of St. Sophia the names of the Patriarchs of Constantinople Sergius, Pyrrhus, Paul, and Peter, and of Cyrus the Patriarch of Alexandria, together with that of Pope Honorius who were all anathematized.⁴⁹⁶ Theodore, Bishop of Faran, was also excommunicated.

Concerning the anathema placed on Pope Honorius, a certain problem arises. Later Western historians found it difficult to accept the excommunication of Honorius as an historical fact. Some maintain that the act referring to him is spurious,⁴⁹⁷ or that Pope Leo accepted the excommunication of Honorius with reservations.⁴⁹⁸ Yet others argue that the

494. A special vestment worn by the deacon. In this instance, his priestly vestment, or as Duchêsne says in fn. 24 in the life of Agatho (L.P., p. 357), the 'pallium'.

495. L.P., I, 354.

496. Mansi, XI, 549-582; Héfélé, OP. CIT., pp. 501, 502.

497. Baronius, ANNALES ECCLESIASTICI, Vols. 11 and 12, Lucae, 1742, for the year 681.

498. Hergenröther, OP. CIT., p. 343. This view is mistaken. Leo ratified the minutiae. Moreover, in his letter to the king of the Visigoths he specifies unreservedly that Honorius was justly excommunicated since he destroyed the faith.

excommunication took place at the insistence of the Eastern church whose presence in large numbers at the Council assured them of dominance of the assembly, or that the representatives of the Pope endorsed the decision without being empowered to do so, or again, that the Emperor refused to approve the election of Leo with the result that they had reached an impasse, or that he was excommunicated not for heretical beliefs but failed to suppress the heresy by a clearly defined statement of the Orthodox dogma.⁴⁹⁹

A rather ludicrous episode took place during the 15th session. A certain monk by name Polychronius, a fanatical Monothelite, who had the power of swaying the masses, insisted that he could prove by miraculous power that Monothelitism was the true and correct dogma. At the insistence of the populace, the Palace and the Council agreed to allow the monk to perform his miracle. In the area before the royal palace, members of the government, of the Council, and a large crowd assembled. A corpse on a litter was brought and placed in the centre of the forum. Polychronius approached and deposited on the corpse a credo of faith which he himself had written. Since the dead person showed no signs of awakening, Polychronius went down on his knees and began to whisper into the corpse's ear. This continued for some time, for some two hours in fact. But the lifeless body, alas, continued to remain motionless. The crowd began to jeer the monk who was promptly seized. He was brought before the Council where despite the exhortations of the august body he persisted in his Monothelitic beliefs. He was then excommunicated.⁵⁰⁰ On the same day, Macarius and his follower Stephen were also excommunicated.⁵⁰¹

Following this session, no other assembly took place until the 9th of August when Constantine, presbyter of the bishopric of

499. Héfélé, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 515-522; Bertolini, *OP. CIT.*, 382-385.

500. Mansi, XI, 601-612; Héfélé, *OP. CIT.*, 506, 507; Duchêsne, *OP. CIT.*, p. 470; Bury, II, 318.

501. Stephen, the pupil of Macarius, was responsible for teaching the Monothelitic doctrine to Philippicus (Bardanes) who became Emperor in 711. Mansi, XII, 192.

Apameia in Syria,⁵⁰² declared that the harm suffered by the Byzantines in Thrace was due to religious controversies. But he was deemed a heretic and was ejected from the Council. Under the prodding of the Emperor, the Council finally agreed to draft a single unified statement which was read on September 11 and was endorsed by all those present. Once having approved the minutes, the statement of faith was signed by all the representatives, metropolitans and bishops on September 16 in the presence of the Emperor who himself finally endorsed it.⁵⁰³ Constantine issued an imperial decree⁵⁰⁴ ratifying the minutes of the Council which was posted in the third narthex of St. Sophia, generally used for posting documents of this nature.

Constantine personally presided at the first 11 sessions and then at the 18th or last assembly. His continued attendance of the meetings would indicate his greater interest in religious matters than in affairs of government, especially in the earlier sessions when the minutes and the canons of the previous Ecumenical Councils were read. In the course of the 11th session and at the moment when Macarius was deemed a heretic, Constantine suddenly made known to the gathering that he was forced to absent himself from further sessions in view of the pressing matters of state.⁵⁰⁵ Acting in his stead in his absence were the patricians Constantine and Anastasius, aided by the consuls Polyeuctes and Peter. The patricius Constantine presided at the meetings. The argument supported by certain historians that the papal legates presided at the meetings is unfounded.⁵⁰⁶ After the departure of the Emperor Constantine, the sessions were held more or less regularly until the end of April when they were interrupted for three and a half months for some unknown reason. Within a period of less than six months, 15 sessions were held. But why this sudden long interruption when the statements were unanimously agreed to along general

502. See Chapt. V, para. 3 and fn. 423.

503. Mansi, XI, 621-696; Héfélé, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 508-512.

504. Mansi, XI, 697 and f.; Dölger, *REGESTEN*, for the year 681 (No. 245); Gennadius, *HISTORY* etc., 248; Jaffe-Wattenbach, *REGESTA* etc., No. 2118, p. 210.

505. Mansi, XI, 455-518.

506. Hergenröther, *OP. CIT.*, p. 331.

lines and there was no opposition to those listed for excommunication? What was it that hindered the Council from continuing its meetings and bringing the Council to a close? It does not take too long for the minutes to be recorded and the confession of faith to be drawn up. These can be all endorsed and ratified at a single meeting, and then five days later, in the presence of the Emperor, those ecclesiastics present sign the documents which are finalized by the Emperor and then the decree of approval is posted in the narthex of St. Sophia. It should be pointed out that the names of Heraclius and Tiberius which were always recorded in the acta of the Council ceased to appear on the documents. Moreover, the imperial letter (*sacra*) sent to Leo in December of 681 was signed by Constantine alone, with of course the other bishops.⁵⁰⁷

The departure of Constantine, the remarks made by the representative of the Bishop of Apameia in August, and the rapid closing of business by the Council have provided the grounds for Kulakovski and those historians who support his interpretation to argue that the expedition against the Bulgars then took place, and that Constantine did not leave the battlefield because he was ill, but rather that he was more concerned that the Ecumenical Council was prolonged unduly and had slowed down in its deliberations, than with the military campaign against the 'foul race'. Furthermore, as I have often emphasized, Constantine was not a soldier.

Another problem has arisen concerning the number of prelates who attended the Ecumenical Council. Although the number of those who signed the minutes is known, there is a great discrepancy in the sources and in the views of contemporary historians concerning the number who attended.⁵⁰⁸ It is my impression that on the basis of those as

507. Dölger, *REGESTEN*, No. 247.

508. Theophanes, p. 360, and Cedrenus speak of 289 bishops etc., a highly improbable number. Eutychius also, p. 1114, records the same number and adds that the Patriarch George of Constantinople presided. Both sources are unreliable. George the Monk, p. 725, Joel, p. 48, Synopsis Sathas, p. 114, mention 170 bishops etc. The S.O.C., p. 212, records 150. The same number is mentioned by the Chronicle of Bede, p. 314, of Pauli Diaconis, VI, 1,

recorded in Mansi, the number was about 166 to whom should be added the twelve dignitaries of the palace of Constantinople. Those who signed the minutes of the Council were the following hierarchs: three delegates of the Pope, the Patriarch of Constantinople George, the Patriarch of Antioch Theophanes, the representatives of the patriarchates of Alexandria and Jerusalem, three delegates of the synod of Rome, three legates of the Roman church, one representative of the archbishop of Ravenna, one of the archbishop of Cyprus, and 151 metropolitans, bishops, and representatives of these bodies, a total of 166 ecclesiastical functionaries.

Of interest is the attitude of the Monophysites of the East to the Ecumenical Council. They maintain that Theodore, the senior delegate of Pope Agatho, succeeded in gaining the support of the Emperor by a bribe in gold, and that 250 bishops assembled for the Council which confirmed the heresy of Maximus (?) and so on.⁵⁰⁹

Wishing to please the Western church and perhaps persuaded by the papal delegates, Constantine released the church of Rome from the obligation to pay the contribution for recognition of a papal election, as was the longstanding tradition. But at the same time it was explicitly understood that no enthronement of a Pope could take place without the previous approval of the Emperor.⁵¹⁰ It appears also that Constantine diminished the taxes for the church estates of Sicily.⁵¹¹

Pope Leo II (682-683) who succeeded Agatho endorsed the

Romualdi, *Arch Salernitani*, p. 130, and the *Chronicle*, *Gesta etc. Neapolitanorum*, p. 419. Héfélé, *OP. CIT.*, p. 485, and Bury, II, 317, say 174.

509. Michael the Syrian, II, 451, 452, who adds that neither the patriarch of Constantinople nor of Antioch were in favour of the Council, hence were deposed. Moreover, that no bishop of Egypt, of Syria or Palestine attended the Council, and in their place they substituted others whom they recognized as delegates from these churches. Also that the brothers of the Emperor were not invited since they were not opposed to the heresy and that finally the bishops endorsed the documents on orders of the Emperor.

510. L.P., I, 353, fn. 34, p. 358; Diehl, *OP. CIT.*, p. 243; Bréhier, *OP. CIT.*, p. 189; Héfélé, *OP. CIT.*, p. 506; Diehl, *L'EXARCHAT etc.*

511. Amantos, *OP. CIT.*, I, 333; Bertolini, *OP. CIT.*, p. 388.

minutes of the Council and sent a letter to the Emperor to that effect.⁵¹² Following an understanding between the new Pope and the archbishop of Ravenna, Constantine nullified the decree granting independence to the church of Ravenna which, without losing its autocephalous status, was again brought within the jurisdiction of the Roman church. The agreement between Pope Leo and the Archbishop Theodore provided that the 'pallium' would be given by the Pope, but the church would be autocephalous and the newly elected archbishop would be released from the obligation of payment of a fee to Rome on his enthronement, as was the long-standing tradition.⁵¹³

The former patriarch of Antioch Macarius, his follower Stephen, and the monks Polychrones, Epiphanius, Anastasius, and Leontius were sent to Rome. The Pope (or rather, the delegates of the Western church) tried to persuade them to renounce their Monothelitic way, but succeeded only in prevailing upon the latter two. Following this, Macarius, Stephen, Epiphanius, and Polychrones were immured in monasteries of Rome where they ended their days.⁵¹⁴

During the brief papacy of Benedict II (684-685) who succeeded Pope Leo II upon the latter's death, Constantine, in the wake of the persistent pleas of the new Pope, agreed in 684 to surrender the right of imperial approval of the papal candidate to the Exarch of Italy in order to accelerate the process of papal enthronement.⁵¹⁵

In the light of these benevolent gestures and until the death of Constantine IV, the relationships between Constantinople and the West were peaceful and cordial. One thing is certain: Constantine yielded to nearly all the demands of Rome despite

512. L.P., I, 359; Migne, P.G., Vol. 96, p. 399; Jaffé, No. 2118; Héfélé, OP. CIT., p. 514.

513. L.P., I, 360; Agnelli, L.P. ECCL. RAVENNATIS, para. 124, pp. 359, 360; Jaffé, No. 2123; Dölger, OP. CIT., No. 251; Caspar, OP. CIT., p. 615; Bertolini, OP. CIT., p. 392; Amantos, OP. CIT., p. 333; Bréhier, OP. CIT., V, 191.

514. L.P., I, 359; Héfélé, OP. CIT., p. 515; Duchêsne, OP. CIT., p. 471.

515. L.P., I, 363; Jaffé, for the year 684; Hodgkin, OP. CIT., VI, 536; Hartmann, GESCHICHTE usw., II, 69; Diehl, EXARCHAT etc., p. 180; Gay, QUELQUES REMARQUES etc.; Bertolini, OP. CIT., pp. 392, 393.

the strong opposition of many prelates of the Eastern church, of the people, and of part of the army. This reaction erupted in a pronounced manner; it caused and was destined to cause in the future much harm to Byzantium. Constantine, by such liberal measures, had hoped to strengthen the imperial position in the West⁵¹⁶ so as to be completely free to face the enemies of the East, but which enemies he failed to meet.

4

In the period in question, there appeared a new Christian heresy that was destined to play an important role in the history of Europe. Although the purpose of the present study is not to deal at length with ecclesiastical history, it would not be out of place to devote some space to a fleeting summary of this important heresy. It should be noted that most extant sources dealing with the subject are Greek.

According to George the Monk,⁵¹⁷ the Paulicians were so named from Paul, the son of Callinike, who was a Manichean⁵¹⁸ living in Samosata. Paul, in accordance with this tradition, which is not the official Paulician story, was the founder of the first community and had converted many individuals in the area of Pontus to his new religion. It appears that the Paulicians of Armenia clashed with the Armenian Catholicus Nerses III (641/2 - 661/2) who launched a major campaign of persecution against the dangerous sect, as a result of which many were forced to seek asylum in Byzantine territory where they settled for the most part in the region between the Lycus and Iris rivers near

516. Barker, JUSTINIAN etc., p. 253.

517. George the Monk, pp. 718 and f.; Cedrenus, SYNOPSIS.

518. Manicheism was a Christian heresy. Manis was the first to teach the heresy. He came from a good Persian family and organized in the Third Century a religious community. The theory of this heresy is a mixture of Zoroastrian, Buddhist, and Christian beliefs. Manicheism suffered many great persecutions both on the part of the Persians and the Christian church, yet it survived and spread to Europe, Asia and Africa. From this heresy derive various other religious sects including the Paulicians, Bogomils, Cathars, Albigenes (Albigensis), etc.

Nicopolis (the contemporary Enderers) and Neocaesarea (Niksar).⁵¹⁹

The monk and abbot Peter the Sicilian, who devoted much of his time to the heresy and wrote a diatribe attacking the Paulician sect⁵²⁰ which, it appears, is the primary source, devotes the first part of his work to Callinike and her son Paul, then goes on to say, in paragraph 94, that in the reign of Constantine, grandson of Heraclius (hence Constantine III, known as Constans), there was an Armenian by name Constantine who propagated the heresy in the area of Armenian Samosata.⁵²¹ He assumed the name of Siluanus and fled to Byzantine territory where he taught for 27 years. The Paulicians recognize him as their leader, and not Paul.⁵²² This is considered the official Paulician version.

Constantine led the new sect for 27 years, but after an investigation on the part of the Byzantine officer by name Simeon⁵²³ who had been sent to the area for the purpose, Constantine was condemned and put to death. But Simeon regretted his action and returned to Kibossa where he was converted and took the name of Titus, and led the church for three years. In the reign of Justinian II in about 688 A.D., following complaints by the bishops of the area, there was issued a decree to punish by fire all those who did not renounce the new dogma. Simeon was burnt to death at the same site where Constantine-Siluanus had been executed before him. Many took flight amongst whom was a certain Paul, an Armenian, who had two sons by name Gegnesius and Theodore. Paul appointed as

519. Charanis, *THE ARMENIANS IN THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE*, Lisbon, 1963.

520. I use in this instance the outstanding and most up-to-date edition of his study, which was edited by P. Lemerle and his staff over a long period of time and was published in *Travaux et Mémoires*, Vol. IV, 1970.

521. Patriarch Photius, in his *RELATION OF THE RECENT MANICHEAN EFFUSION*, Migne, P.G., Vol. 102, writes Syrian Samosata. But he used as a source Peter the Sicilian.

522. See also George the Monk. I do not cite Cedrenus since he copies George for the most part.

523. Runciman, *THE MEDIEVAL MANICHEAN*, Cambridge, 1947; Garsoian, N., *THE PAULICIAN HERESY*, p. 117.

teacher, that is, as head of the church, his son Gegnesius, who was renamed Timotheos and who led the church for 30 years. Peter of Sicily appears to forget what he had written in the earlier passage when in paragraph 112 and following he says that the members of the religious community ceased being called Manicheans and took the name of Paulicians from this Paul.

Runciman argues that initially the name Paulicians was applied to the sect on account of their great admiration for the Apostle Paul and the Armenians named them thus, which means the followers of Paul. He goes on to add, in view of the fact that no book of theirs has survived,⁵²⁴ and that all our information comes from Greek sources, primarily from Peter the Sicilian, the details of their dogma are not known but must for the most part be at best conjectural.

The learned academician P. Lemerle, under whose supervision the supplements and corrigenda of the sources were published, which deal with the matter, studied the problem at great length and in his excellent study⁵²⁵ he reaches certain conclusions based on the Greek sources.

1. The Paulicians did not recognize Paul, son of Callinike, but looked upon Paul, father of Gegnesius, as the one responsible for the name.

2. The physiognomy of this latter Paul is quite enigmatic when considering the role he played.

3. There is no concrete geographic information supplied concerning the cities and towns that are mentioned.

4. There are difficulties with the chronology.

On the basis of all these facts, and especially those supplied

524. It is questionable whether any book had been written. George the Monk, p. 720, records that Constantine Siluanus passed on the heretical teaching 'not in writing, but orally, and the Gospels and the book of the Apostle (?) were the only written sources, which were not altered in writing or word, but of which each chapter was corrupted to fit in with their heresies and this so that no other book would be read.' Peter writes somewhat the same in paras. 95-98. Also in the small work 'Handbook of Peter the Abbot', which Peter composed as a kind of synopsis of his primary work, he quotes, in para. 4, almost word for word, the text of George the Monk. See *Travaux*, etc., IV, 81.

525. P. Lemerle, *L'HISTOIRE DES PAULICIENS D'ASIE MINEURE* etc., in *Travaux et Mémoires*, Vol. V, 1973.

by Lemerle's study, I have drawn certain conclusions. Manichees in Byzantium was the name given to all heretics who accepted the 'gnostic'⁵²⁶ theories whether they were Marcionites⁵²⁷ or Manichees, and so on. Probably in accordance with an old tradition a certain Paul of Samosata began to preach the new heresy which may have spread to Armenia. In 655 the Armenian heretics, either because they were being persecuted by the Catholicos of Armenia Nerses III, or because the country had surrendered to the Arabs, fled to Byzantine territories in those areas where Paul had originally taught, and proclaimed as their teacher and leader Constantine Siluanus. The traditions concerning the renaming of the heresy have already been commented upon. At all events, with the exception of the condemnation to death of Constantine Siluanus in the reign of Justinian II, no general persecution appears to have taken place at the time. Moreover, Armenian sources do not accept these views. It is noteworthy that the two versions, Greek and Armenian, agree neither geographically nor chronologically with the events.

526. The most widespread heresy since the days of antiquity which aimed to elevate the Christian faith to philosophical heights by which a satisfactory answer could be found concerning the beginning of the world etc.

527. Followers of Marcion of Sinope who became a religious leader in the 2nd Century A.D., was excommunicated and established a religious heresy which in the 6th Century was blended with the Manicheean heresy.

CHAPTER VII

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

In the entire course of the reign of Constantine IV, various problems arose which call for some investigation and explanation. The religious problem that had repercussions on internal affairs has been examined in the preceding chapter. But there are other themes regarding the royal family, the administration and the economy of the Empire that should be dealt with at this stage.

1

As pointed out in Vol. III,⁵²⁸ Constantine III crowned his three sons as Emperors, Constantine in 654, Heraclius and Tiberius in 659. But his sudden death had prevented him from making arrangements for the proper succession and the manner in which the co-sovereigns were to rule the Empire. In former times, when the Empire was extensive it was the custom of the Emperor to divide the realm among his sons. The last such attempt was recorded in Maurice's will,⁵²⁹ which was not fulfilled on account of the rebellion and the murder of Maurice. In his will,⁵³⁰ Heraclius had made provisions that his two sons, Constantine II who was crowned co-Emperor 612 or 613, and Heraclius II, who was made co-Emperor in 638, reign jointly as equals, irrespective of the fact that as the elder, Constantine would be the senior in rank, at least until the younger brother came of age. But such provision was not made by the murdered Emperor. It is true that as soon as news of the assassination of

528. See Vol. III, p. 4. Also Chapt. I of this volume.

529. Theophylactus Simicattus, *HISTORY*, ed. De Boor, Leipzig, 1887, VIII, 11 (pp. 305, 306).

530. Nicephorus, p. 27.

Constantine III reached the capital, Constantine IV took over the reins of government and left for Sicily to reimpose imperial control there, but this was to be expected, for his brothers were 5 and 7 years younger than he who was about 18 years of age. Theophanes, in his customary manner, confounded the issue. He used different sources but did not correlate them, thus creating a problem for no reason whatsoever.

For the year 6161 (A.D. 669), Theophanes records that after the restoration of order (in Sicily), he returned to Constantinople 'and reigned over the Romans with Tiberius and Heraclius, his brothers'.⁵³¹ Theophanes then continues for 6161 (A.D. 669-670) that 'in this year Constantine reigned with his brothers.... those in the Anotolikon theme came...' then he relates the mutiny of the army, about which more later, and concludes with 'the emperor slit the noses of his brothers'.⁵³² Nose-slitting, as has been frequently pointed out, barred a person from occupying the imperial throne.

Theophanes again writes for the year 6173 (A.D. 681)⁵³³ 'in that year Constantine removed his brothers Heraclius and Tiberius as sovereigns'.

Such are the two versions dealing with the removal from the throne of the brothers of Constantine IV and their nose-slitting. The first version, however, conflicts with sources that are contemporary with the events, that is, with the correspondence of the Popes and the acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council. As pointed out in the preceding chapter, the letter of Pope Agatho in A.D. 680 in which he announces the dispatch of the Roman delegation, he refers to 'the serene and devout... Heraclius and

531. Theophanes, p. 352. About the same is recorded by Cedrenus, Leo the Grammarian, Michael the Syrian, II, 451, and Agapius, p. 231 who dates the event in the 50th year of the Hegira (670).

532. Theophanes, p. 532; Cedrenus, Zonaras, III, 317, and Leo the Grammarian, p. 159, write identically.

533. Theophanes, p. 360, Cedrenus, George the Monk, p. 728, say after the victory against the Arabs. Michael the Syrian, II, 435 records likewise. Agapius and Andrea Dandolo say after the Council. The Chronicle of the year 1234 says two years after the death of Muawiyah, and therefore the 61st of the Arabs (A.D. 680-681).

Tiberius August....', 'the eternal reign of our most divine and devout lords, Constantine the great emperor, Heraclius and Tiberius....'.⁵³⁴ All the conciliar acts are dated by the years of the reign of the three brothers, and therefore at least until September 16, 681, the date of the last act of the Council,⁵³⁵ Heraclius and Tiberius had neither been unthroned nor had their noses slit.

There is yet another completely contemporary piece of evidence proving this version to be incorrect. There have been found coins of the period depicting the three brothers as sovereigns. These coins were minted in as late as 681.⁵³⁶ One in fact is issued in the 27th year of Constantine's reign (680-681) on which are depicted the three brothers.⁵³⁷

The first version in itself cannot be accepted for yet another reason. Theophanes records that the army of the Anatolikon theme clamored, 'we believe in the Trinity, and we shall crown the three. Constantine was deeply disturbed, for he was the only crowned emperor, and his brothers had no title'.

But this conflicts totally with the official contemporary acts. Independently of the acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, there is extant a decree issued in Syracuse by Constantine III in March 666 in which the archbishop of Ravenna obtained an independent status. The chronology of the decree reads '... 25th year of Constantine... and the 12th of the young Constantine, and the 7th of Heraclius and Tiberius'.⁵³⁸ Whom did the soldiers mean to 'crown', if the brothers were already enthroned?

This first version has been accepted by various historians who have attempted to explain away the discrepancy between the

534. Mansi, XI; see *Acta of the Sixth Ecumenical Council*.

535. Mansi, XI, 624.

536. Grierson, *CATALOGUE OF THE BYZANTINE COINS ETC.*, II, 2, 512; Morisson, *CATALOGUE DES MONNAIES etc.*, p. 681; Bellinger, *BYZANTINE NOTES*, pp. 118, 119.

537. Wroth, *IMPERIAL BYZ. COINS etc.*, p. 329.

538. Agnelli, *L.P. ECCLESIAE RAVENNATIS*, pp. 350, 351, and fn. 7, where he writes '... atque novo Constantino, Eraclio et Tiberio a Deo coronatis Filiis'; Dölger, *REGESTEN usw.*, No. 221; Hodgkin, *ITALY etc.*, VI, 374 and fn. 2.

dates of Theophanes and those of contemporary documents.⁵³⁹ Some in fact have maintained that the brothers were deprived of their titles before the termination of the Council.⁵⁴⁰ Nevertheless, this was the purpose of the nose-slitting.

The second version of the events is at present more or less universally accepted. The mutiny of the army, the nose-slitting and the removal from power of the brothers took place after the termination of the Council. The justification, however, of this action does not agree with the chain of events and is not very convincing. The most satisfactory study is that of Brooks⁵⁴¹ who concludes that the nose-slitting and the dethronement occurred because his brothers had plotted against the Emperor, and that the army of the Anatolikon theme was not pleased with the decisions of the Sixth Ecumenical Council.

Ostrogorsky correctly observes that the dethronement did not take place to clear the way for his son Justinian as co-Emperor, whom in any case he did not make co-Emperor, but because he wanted imperial control to be unified and especially indivisible.⁵⁴² He adds, however, that besides the army, there was opposition to his plan in the Senate, a fact not verified by any source.

According to the narrative of Theophanes, the army of the Anatolikon theme mutinied in A.D. 680-681. Constantine then sent the patrician Theodore of Colonia⁵⁴³ who deceived them with promises and praises, and brought the ringleaders to

539. Du Gange, pp. 110-121, says that the brothers were not crowned; Lebeau, *HISTOIRE* etc., XI, 408 and f., that Constantine had given his brothers the title of Augustus but had not crowned them; Bury, *OP. CIT.*, II, 308, 309, that they were Caesars and the army demanded that they be crowned co-Emperors.

540. Bréhier: *LES DERNIERS HERACLIDES*, p. 181.

541. Brooks, *THE BROTHERS* etc., also *THE SUCCESSORS* etc., II, 405, who makes the astounding statement that the Eastern troops proceeded to Chrysopolis as soon as they returned from Sicily. While he maintains that the date of the dethronement occurred in 680-681, he forgets that the troops of the Anatolikon theme had returned in 669.

542. Ostrogorsky, *OP. CIT.*, 128.

543. He is the same patricius who hindered the departure of the royal family for Syracuse when Constantine III had ordered this. See Vol. III, p. 217.

Constantinople to discuss the terms of agreement, having previously, of course, come to an understanding with the Senate. The Emperor thereupon seized them and had them hanged at Sycae.⁵⁴⁴ When the troops had seen this, they departed and returned to 'their bases'.

The Eastern writers record that a certain leader of the mutiny by name Leo (perhaps the commander of the theme) protested vigorously before the Senate. Constantine ordered that his tongue be cut, and his limbs be severed, and as he was being slowly put to death, he shouted (?) that since the Trinity reigns in heaven, so should the Trinity reign on earth.⁵⁴⁵

There is not an iota of doubt that these events took place in A.D. 681. But the interpretations given to justify the chain of events are not convincing in the least. I believe the views of Trifonov which are supported by Mutafciev,⁵⁴⁶ to be the most logical. This has been dealt with in Chapter V, paragraph 3, and Chapter VI, paragraph 3. Constantine was primarily concerned with church affairs, and was not after all, much of a military man. This accounts for his presiding personally at all the sessions of the Council including the 11th. When he observed that matters were being dealt with in good order and would be concluded in the manner he desired, Constantine then decided to deal with the sufferings of the wretched inhabitants of the northern frontiers of his Empire who had made repeated appeals for protection.⁵⁴⁷ It was then that he ordered his military units to march northwards through Thrace. Among these units was the army of the 'Anatolikon' theme. But Constantine was in no mood to lead a military campaign and decided to return to Constantinople to conclude the business of the Council. It may well be that he had some information of a plot to hinder the union of the two churches in accordance with the views held by

544. The modern Galata.

545. Michael the Syrian, II, 455, 456; Bar Hebraeus, p. 101; Agapius, p. 456; Chronicle of 1234, p. 225; Theophanes, p. 352; George the Monk, p. 728.

546. Trifonov, J., THE RELATION etc. of THE VICTORY OF ISPERICH etc., in *Izvestija Bulg. Hist. Ges.* 11-12 (1931-1932) (in Bulgarian); Mutafciev, P., Review of this article in *B.Z.* 32/1932.

547. Theophanes, p. 358; Nicephorus, p. 34.

the church of Rome. This is, in my opinion, the reason for the departure of Constantine. When the 'army of the East' of which the Monothelites were in the majority learned of his departure, it decided to follow him to Constantinople to put a stop to any renouncement of the Monothelitic dogma. When the remaining imperial force saw the departure of the Emperor and of the 'Anatolikon' troops, they were seized by panic and retreated in disordered array. And when the army was attacked suddenly by the Bulgars, the withdrawal soon became a flight. The 'Anatolikon' troops reached the capital and in A.D. 681 the incidents, as recorded by the various sources and as described above, took place.

There can be little doubt that there was a conspiracy in which the brothers of Constantine were involved. Leo the Grammarian⁵⁴⁸ writes that he had their noses slit and had sent them into exile because they were members of a plot against the Emperor. The Sathas Synopsis⁵⁴⁹ states that 'he had the noses of his own brothers Tiberius and Heraclius slit because they mutinied'. Agapius also recorded that he exiled them to an island.⁵⁵⁰ It is unfortunately true that no single historian makes use of this basic information. At all events, beginning in September of 681, the names of the two brothers disappear from all the acta and their images are no longer found on the coinage.

2

A question that arises and to which various conflicting answers have been given concerns Justinian, son of Constantine, and whether he was crowned co-Emperor, and if so the date of his coronation.

The problem arose from a passage in Theophanes who has the careless habit of drawing from various sources though these

548. Leo the Grammarian, p. 159; Theodosius of Melitene, p. 110. The latter usually quotes Leo.

549. SYNOPSIS SATHAS, p. 113.

550. Agapius, p. 456.

may conflict the one with the other. For the year 6161 (669)⁵⁵¹ he writes that Constantine reigned with his brothers Tiberius and Heraclius, that it was the year in which the mutiny of the 'Anatolikon' troops took place and in which he had ordered their noses to be mutilated, thus making it impossible for them to reign. These latter events, of course, did not occur in 669, and the only correct statement he makes is that Constantine reigned with his brothers, as seen in the coins that were minted in that year on which coins the three brothers are depicted. For the year 6173 (681) Theophanes⁵⁵² records that he removed his brothers and reigned jointly with his son Justinian. Many other sources write identically.⁵⁵³ On the other hand, there are sources⁵⁵⁴ that say Constantine ruled alone. Some contemporary historians support the one version, while others support the latter version.

In a letter of Justinian II addressed to Pope John VII, dated 17 February 687, there is mentioned the 2nd year of the reign of Justinian.⁵⁵⁵ This evidence would make impossible the enthronement of Justinian as co-Emperor before A.D. 685, otherwise it would have been the third or fourth year of his reign.

It was also the custom when minting coins to stamp the images of both the Emperor and co-Emperor on these. Yet no single coin has been found that depicts Constantine with his son Justinian.⁵⁵⁶ In the light of all such evidence, I have reached certain conclusions. In all probability, Justinian was crowned by his father a few days before his death, as Leo the Grammarian records, yet one cannot be absolutely certain⁵⁵⁷ of the fact, but this would account for the lack of coins containing the two emperors. But it is also possible that he was not crowned by his

551. Theophanes, p. 352.

552. Theophanes, p. 360.

553. Cedrenus, 770/841; Leo the Grammarian, p. 162, who adds that he crowned his son as co-Emperor; Andrea Dandolo, *CHRONICON*, p. 101, writes identically; Joel, p. 48; Chronicle of the year 1234, p. 225.

554. Michael the Syrian, II, 456; Agapius, p. 234; Bar Hebraeus, p. 101.

555. Mansi, XI, 737, 738.

556. Grierson, *A CATALOGUE* etc., p. 512.

557. Brooks, *THE BROTHERS* etc.; Dölger, in review of Kornemann, *DOPPEL PRINZIPÄT* usw.; Grabar, *L'ICONOCLASME BYZANTIN*, p. 39; Christofilopoulou, *ELECTION* etc., pp. 74 and 126.

father, and was enthroned after the latter's death.⁵⁵⁸ Yet in view of the traditional nomination and ceremony of enthronement of emperors, I believe that Justinian was crowned by his father just before his death, to assure the regular succession to the throne.

3

On the problems dealing with the reorganization and further developments in the administrative sector, I will not deal at length. Considerable space has been already devoted to the establishment of the themes.⁵⁵⁹ I will deal briefly with certain problems regarding the organization of the Thracian theme.

Ostrogorsky continues to maintain his rather peculiar theory that where no 'theme' existed there was no actual imperial control in that area.⁵⁶⁰ This argument conflicts with the sources, and indeed with logic. Until A.D. 680-685, there was no Thracian military theme, although the province was an imperial domain. No theme had been established in Macedonia, yet it was governed by the Byzantines. Slavic tribes may have settled there, but the *Miracula of St. Demetrius* explicitly state that although the Slavs had several times assaulted Thessaloniki,⁵⁶¹ the province was governed by imperial administrators. Greece and the Peloponnese itself are not mentioned as themes, and yet even those historians who maintain that the *Chronicle of Monemvasia* is a reliable source, agree that central Greece and the entire Eastern Peloponnese was under imperial control.⁵⁶² Themes were established firstly where an immediate danger of attack existed, and secondly where the possibilities existed for the settlement of inhabitants who could be called upon for

558. Kornemann, *OP. CIT.*; Grierson, *OP. CIT.*

559. See Chapt. XIX, para. 4 of Vol. I.

560. Ostrogorsky, *THE CREATION OF THE THEMES etc. and BYZANTIUM AND THE SOUTH SLAVS.*

561. In the case of Kouver (see Chapt. IV) it is recorded that he asked the imperial authorities to order the Slavic tribe living nearby to supply 'his people' with food. If there had been no imperial rule, then no such request could have been made, and moreover, it could not have been executed.

562. See Chaps. VII and IX of Vol. III.

military service. The first two themes were established on such grounds in the 6th Century in Italy and Africa where there existed an immediate external threat and Byzantium was too weak to send reinforcements. These were initially known as Exarchates. Then followed the establishment of the Armeniakon theme to meet the Persian menace, the Anatolikon theme to guard Asia Minor from the Arab threat, the Opsikion to protect Constantinople and its environs which were threatened by perpetual invasions. Constantine III in 661-662 founded the Hellas theme which included the entire former province of Greece to meet, not the Slavic menace, which did not in any case exist, but the dangers from the young aggressive Arab power. For precisely the same reason in 664-666, the theme of Sicily was established. Hence the themes were organized not in a planned or methodic manner but wherever there was a need to confront enemies who threatened the respective provinces of the Empire.⁵⁶³ Subsequently, in the 8th Century, this administrative unit became universal throughout Byzantium. But in the latter case, the reason was no longer only of military expediency. It was also for financial reasons. The fact that several of them are not mentioned in the famous letter of Justinian II⁵⁶⁴ is not of any special significance since the letter cites only those who took part in the assembly who were not only governors of themes but senators, citizens, the church, excubitors, and the strategoi of army units who were present. To cite but one example, the strategos of Ceuta and of Sardinia are mentioned and these latter provinces were not themes.

A problem arises concerning the establishment of a Thracian theme and whether a theme of the Carabisiani was formed.

I. The sole source mentioning the Thracian theme is the *De Thematribus* of Constantine Porphyrogenetus.⁵⁶⁵ In the chapters on the themes of Europe, he records that it was established by Constantine since 'the detestable race of the

563. See Vol. III, pp. 206-207 and 229-230; Kyriakides, *BYZANTINE STUDIES*, p. 224; Pertusi, *LA FORMATION DES THEMES* etc.

564. Mansi, XI, 737, 738.

565. I use in this instance the fine edition by Pertusi of the *De Thematribus*.

Bulgars crossed the Istros (Danube) river, the Emperor was forced by the incursions of the Scythians and these Bulgars....' It has been pointed out in Chapter V that the Bulgars crossed the Istros in pursuit of the retreating Byzantine army and once they established themselves in the region between the Danube and the Haemus range, began conducting raids into the various imperial provinces. In his comments (p. 156), Pertusi writes that the first record of the existence of this theme is met with in A.D. 742.⁵⁶⁶ Most contemporary historians agree that the theme was established between 680 and 685 to protect the area of Thrace from the incursions of the Bulgars.⁵⁶⁷ Kyriakides astutely observes that the theme of Thrace could not have been founded before 680 since at the Sixth Ecumenical Council the patricius and count of the Opsikion and deputy strategos of the area of Thrace were in attendance. And in fact, as Constantine Porphyrogenetus remarks, the province of Thrace was under the direct rule of the Emperor and no strategos commanded the province. The troops of Thrace were usually drawn upon to reinforce the garrison of the capital, such as in the year 641.⁵⁶⁸ It has been pointed out in the previous chapters that the Bulgars crossed the Danube in 681 and a peace was concluded at the end of 681. Following the treaty of peace, no Bulgar invasions of imperial territory took place.⁵⁶⁹ Yet Constantine Porphyrogenetus is explicit. The theme was established as an administrative unit by Constantine and in view of the fact that the latter died in 685, the date of the organization of the theme falls between 681 or rather 682 and 685.

The theme included the whole of the former extensive province of Thrace, and probably Macedonia, but not Moesia II

566. Nicephorus, p. 60.

567. Ostrogorsky, *A HISTORY*, p. 133; Lemerle, *PHILIPPES* etc., p. 120; Obolensky, *C.M.H.*, new ed., Vol. IV, p. 489; Vasiliev, *HISTOIRE* etc., I, 302; Kyriakides, *OP. CIT.*, p. 117; Zakythinos, *STUDIES ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE* etc.; Diehl, *ETUDES* etc., p. 283.

568. See Vol. II, p. 190, where is described that Martina summoned the garrison of Thrace to suppress the mutiny, etc.

569. Kyriakides, *OP. CIT.*, p. 118.

and Scythia, which had been occupied by the Bulgars.⁵⁷⁰ The first capital city of the theme is unknown, but later the administrative centre was Arcadiopolis (the modern Lule Burghas).

II. Karabisiani. This thorny problem has vexed historians for many years and continues to divide opinions. Was a maritime theme established before the 8th Century?

The majority of historians who support the contention that such a theme was established as an administrative unit, rely primarily upon two pieces of evidence: the letter of the Emperor Justinian II addressed to Pope John; and that already in the 7th Century there appears a 'strategos of the Karabon' or the Karabisiani (the fleet) and a drungarius 'of the Cibyrrhaeots'.

1. In Justinian's letter, mention is made of, among other generals, the 'deinde ex Kabarisianis', that is, following or with the Kabarisiani. Many historians have observed that in view of the fact that no such area as 'Kabaron' exists, a metathesis must have occurred in the word and should therefore properly read 'Karabisiani'. This proves that the maritime theme had been established as had other themes as administrative units.⁵⁷¹

2. There are various references in the sources⁵⁷² mentioning a 'strategos of the Karavon', a 'fleet of the Cibyrrheots', 'Drungarius of the Cibyrrheots', 'strategos of the Karabisiani', and so on. The existence of strategoi and drungarii would indicate that a theme of the Karabisiani already existed in the 7th Century. H. Ahrweiler⁵⁷³ has very logically rejected this theory.

In Volume III, Chapter X, paragraph 3, I have related that after the naval engagement at Phoenix which was calamitous for

570. Pertusi, *OP. CIT.*, p. 157; Kyriakides, *OP. CIT.*, p. 126; Gelzer, *DIE GENESIS* usw., pp. 121 and 130.

571. Pertusi, in the comments on his edition of the *De Thematribus*; Ostrogorsky, *OP. CIT.*; Diehl, *ETUDES BYZANTINES*; Bury, *OP. CIT.*; Lombard, *ARSENAUX* etc.; Gelzer, *OP. CIT.*; Charanis, *OBSERVATIONS ON THE HISTORY* etc.; Ensslin, in *C.M.H.*, Vol. IV, new ed., pp. 36 and f.

572. *Miracula of St. Demetrius*, ed. Migne, P.G., Vol. 116, and Tougaard, *DE L'HISTOIRE* etc. See also Chapt. IV, para. 2; Theophanes, p. 370; Nicephorus, p. 40; L.P., I, 390.

573. Ahrweiler, *BYZANCE ET LA MER*; Antoniades-Bibikou, *ETUDES D'HISTOIRE MARITIME*, pp. 78 and f., Paris, 1966.

both the Byzantine and Arab fleets, Constantine III had built many ships and probably after strengthening the home imperial fleet (the Ploimon) began to organize fast light-armed cruisers for the outlying territories, the purpose of which was to protect the coastal areas of the Aegean Sea against piratical raids on the part of the Arabs. This was the beginning of the fleet of 'the Karavon', the crews of which were inducted from the maritime population of the islands and the coastal areas. This fleet was further strengthened by Constantine IV which accounts for the more frequent mention of the fleet in the chronicles during his reign. As has already been pointed out, such a fleet could not hope to confront the entire Arab armada or to oppose the large invasions, but it was composed of fast-moving light vessels. Its principal base was at Cibyrria,⁵⁷⁴ and this accounts for the rank of 'drugarius of the Cibyrriots'. It was the equivalent of an army corps (theme)⁵⁷⁵ but never stretched over a defined or specific area of which the governor, whether military or civilian, was a strategos of the Karavon. Cibyrria then came under the Anatolikon theme. Ahrweiler is certainly justified in writing that the fleet of the Karavon never played an important role in the affairs of Byzantium at this time, and could not hinder the great invasions of Rhodes, Crete and Asia Minor, nor could it block the passage through the Aegean of the Arab fleet on its way to lay siege to Constantinople, since as I have already noted, its aim was to hinder piratical raids or to counter the moves of smaller groups of Arab ships, since this fleet consisted of light, speedy vessels for the purpose. It was precisely for its ineffectiveness in the larger operations, and primarily because of its composition, that Leo III abolished it after the lifting of the siege of Constantinople in the 8th Century and in its place established the maritime themes with well-defined administrative areas and organization, as were the military themes. He was responsible for the thematic fleets which were to be of such importance to Byzantium.

574. See fn. 168 above.

575. Before the term 'theme' came to signify an administrative area, it was the name given to a military unit, an army corps, at the head of which was the strategos and next in rank the drugarius.

It is not an easy matter to describe the economic, social and monetary conditions of a limited period and indeed of a period for which neither contemporary sources exist nor administrative decrees have survived. After all is said and done, the economic and social developments are the result of preceding actions and developments that undergo continually changing phases. Nevertheless, an attempt will be made in this section to outline as briefly as possible the economic situation of the period under study.

The intermittent raids and incursions and the ensuing devastation of the various provinces inevitably resulted in a decimation of population and a diminution of the economic activity in these provinces. With the loss of the Eastern districts, many of the Greek and Christian inhabitants flocked to Asia Minor and continued to do so over a period of time with the result that the agrarian and working population in that region was considerably increased. Something similar occurred in the Balkans with the peaceful infiltration of the Slavs who settled there either by choice or at the instigation of the imperial government in desolate or uncultivated lands. But the need to defend these territories forced the central administration to resurrect the ancient system of land grants to individuals who became liable for military service in time of need. This is neither the time nor place to describe the practice in any detail. The new policy which was in effect the revival of a system existing in the frontier regions gave added impetus to the development of an agrarian economy based on independent cultivators of the soil.⁵⁷⁶ It is certainly true that large landed estates did not cease to exist, but when the themes were established and developed a free agrarian economy based on small landholdings was considerably strengthened. Yet it is unfortunate that this new system was slow in spreading to other provinces of Byzantium,

⁵⁷⁶ Ostrogorsky, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 132, 133, and *AGRARIAN CONDITIONS* etc., in *C.E.H.*, I, 207; Vasiliev, *ON THE QUESTION OF BYZANTINE FEUDALISM*; Hussey, *LE MONDE DE BYZANCE*, p. 28.

for, as has been repeatedly pointed out, the themes were initially founded in those areas where an immediate danger existed and the economic means were available to establish the themes.

But these movements of the population had unfortunate repercussions on the Empire. Many monks who fled, especially from Palestine and Egypt, founded new monasteries. There have survived imperial charters of the 7th and 8th Centuries signed by Constantine IV and Justinian II granting exemption from taxes to all those monks who owned properties. In this period of Byzantine history, monastic properties and estates existed on a vast scale.⁵⁷⁷ And inevitably this weakened the Empire further since the sources of income available to the central administration were considerably diminished.

In this century there began a reorganization of the financial administration of Byzantium. The *Comes Largitionum* was abolished and in its place came the 'logothete of the general treasury'. The *Comes Rei Privatus*, or the officer responsible for the imperial treasury was renamed the 'Sacellarius',⁵⁷⁸ or the logothete of the special fund. He eventually, after the 8th Century, became the chief supervisor of the public treasury. The basic aim of the new administrative policy was to reorganize the tax bureaus in such manner as to centralize further the machinery in the hands of the Emperor. Already by A.D. 680 there began to appear in the themes the logothete of the Army who was responsible for the administration and the finances of every theme. The logothetes of the themes were directly responsible to the logothete of the armed forces.⁵⁷⁹ At about this time, there had been established on a wide scale the institution of the 'commerciarius',⁵⁸⁰ when many commercia were founded to

577. Vasiliev, *OP. CIT.*

578. Brooks, in *C.M.H.*, II, 397; Haussig, *HISTOIRE DE LA CIVILISATION* etc., p. 399.

579. Haussig, *OP. CIT.*, p. 105.

580. The *commerciarius* was in charge of a *commercium*. The *commercium* originally was the name given to the customs office and eventually the warehouse wherein the various products and merchandise were stored. See Vol. III, fn. 648; Lopez, *THE ROLE OF TRADE*, in *D.O.P.*, 13/1959; Runciman, *BYZANTINE TRADE AND INDUSTRY*, in *C.M.H.*, II, 93; Antoniadou Bibikou, *LES DOUANES A BYZANCE*, Paris, 1963.

collect taxes. The Comes of Trade was abolished and replaced by the general *commerciarius*. Subsequently there was a general *commerciarius* for each theme. Many seals of the *commerciarii* or general *commerciarii* of the 7th Century have been found on which were imprinted the head of Constantine III alone or with his sons. Also of Constantine IV with Justinian II.⁵⁸¹

The Arab conquest of Syria, Egypt and Armenia was an irreparable blow to Byzantium, not only because these wealthy provinces were lost but primarily because the Empire was deprived of the natural trade routes through which flowed much raw materials, and gold. Byzantine economy was based on the importation of raw materials, especially silk, and on the manufacture and export of these finished goods to the West from which she received gold in exchange. It is true that already a century before, Byzantium began to produce silk, but the quantity produced was not sufficient for her insatiable needs. Moreover, the largest silk manufacturing centres had been established in Syria and Egypt. Syria in fact had a virtual monopoly in the production of refined materials.⁵⁸² Byzantium was forced to establish new workshops in Asia Minor, Constantinople, Thessaloniki, and central Greece,⁵⁸³ but this naturally took time in the course of which her trade and the movement of merchandise had dropped considerably.

Gold was of vital importance to the Empire, for with gold alone she could pay for the raw materials that she imported. Besides Armenia, Egypt, Abyssinia, and Arabia, one of her great sources of the precious metal was the West to which she sold her valuable merchandise in exchange. But in the 7th Century the reserves of gold in the West had virtually disappeared.⁵⁸⁴ Egypt, moreover, was the sole producer of papyrus, and Byzantium not only lost the monopoly of the papyrus industry, but was compelled to pay with gold for the

581. Schlumberger, *SIGILLOGRAPHIE DE L'EMPIRE BYZANTIN*, Paris, 1884; Antoniadis-Bibikou, *OP. CIT.*

582. Haussig, *HISTOIRE DE LA CIVILISATION BYZANTINE*, p. 66.

583. Bratianu, *ETUDES BYZANTINES D'HISTOIRE ECONOMIQUES ET SOCIALES*, p. 74, Paris, 1938.

584. Lombard, *L'OR MUSULMAN* etc., p. 144.

large imports of the important item.⁵⁸⁵

The large reserves of gold in the Empire enabled Byzantium to meet the monetary crisis resulting from the decrease of imports of the precious metal. With strict and stringent controls, she was able to maintain the stability of the solidus which continued to be at least until the middle of the 8th Century the unique medium of exchange in Mediterranean trade. For a considerable period of time, however, the circulation of the coin had dropped until the crisis had passed. Byzantium began gradually to play the role of the middle man between the East from which she obtained her raw material and the West which became the market for her manufactured goods.⁵⁸⁶

The imperial mints remaining in the Empire continued to issue coins, and in fact, minted money with improved techniques. It has been maintained, but not with absolute certainty, that after about A.D. 680 the minting of gold coins of a lighter weight had ceased. But these lighter coins had never circulated within the Empire.⁵⁸⁷ The early coins of Constantine were minted with the Emperor wearing a mantle. On the reverse side there was depicted a cross in the centre set on three steps and on either side his brothers the co-Emperors Tiberius and Heraclius.⁵⁸⁸ Soon thereafter appeared coins showing Constantine holding a lance and wearing a helmet and breastplate. From A.D. 669 onwards, all the coins depict Constantine in military uniform, and from 681 Constantine, always in military garb,⁵⁸⁹ appears alone without his brothers.

In the reign of Constantine IV an attempt was made to increase the value of the bronze coins which had fallen by more

585. Lopez, MOHAMMED AND CHARLEMAGNE.

586. Lombard, MONNAIE ET HISTOIRE etc., pp. 190-192.

587. Adelson, LIGHT WEIGHT SOLIDI etc., and EARLY MEDIEVAL TRADE; Grierson, COINAGE AND MONEY etc.; Morisson, CATALOGUE etc., p. 376 and fn. 3.

588. Wroth, CATALOGUE OF THE IMPERIAL etc.; Grierson, A CATALOGUE etc. p. 514.

589. Sabatier, MONNAIES BYZANTINES, II, 17-20; Wroth, OP. CIT., p. XXIX; Grierson, OP. CIT., p. 514; Morisson, OP. CIT., I, 374; Bellinger, BYZANTINE NOTES, pp. 118, 119.

than half their value. Thus began the minting of the 'follis'⁵⁹⁰ weighing 18 grams. But the effort failed in the long run for already in the early 8th Century the value of the bronze coins began to drop.

590. The 'follis' was a subdivision of the silver coin and was used for small exchange and salaries of troops. Grierson, *COINAGE* etc.; Morisson, *OP. CIT.*, p. 376.

CHAPTER VIII

STATE OF THE ARAB EMPIRE

It has been pointed out in Volume III that one cannot fully understand the course of events and the reasons for certain actions and deeds without being acquainted at the same time with the state of affairs existing in the vast Arab Empire in the period covered by this volume. At this point, therefore, the names of the Caliphs should be cited and an effort be made to put down very briefly the facts concerning each, their military activities, the negotiations they conducted with the Greeks, and so on, and their rivalry for leadership in the Arab world. A brief survey should also be made of the situation existing in the Moslem world and something said of those Caliphs who held power when Constantine IV reigned at Constantinople.

But before proceeding with the enumeration of the Caliphs, one should bear in mind that the tribes inhabiting the Arabian peninsula had never recognized a hereditary right of succession. The power may well have been retained by a clan or a tribe, but not necessarily by a family. Lammens points out that on the basis of the principles that had been practiced, especially after the establishment of Islam, the right to rule was not a human right to be passed on from father to son in hereditary fashion. The leader, in this instance, the Caliph, had to be chosen by those possessing the right to designate him. Initially, those possessing this privilege were few in number, namely the Companions of the Prophet. Some time later, the successors of the Companions also acquired this right. Such principle of succession was the cause, soon after the death of Mohammed, of fierce rivalry between certain factions. The Prophet's son-in-law and first cousin had claimed the right to the leadership on the grounds of his close kinship with Mohammed. It was precisely this violation of the long-established principle which led to mutinies, revolutions, and civil strife in the Arab world and a splintering of

the Arab tribes into hostile factions to this very day.

I. *Muawiyah I*: When Constantine IV ascended the throne at Constantinople, Muawiyah was the Caliph. A description of his personality and character has been given in the preceding volume.⁵⁹¹ He was proclaimed Caliph after the withdrawal of Hasan in A.D. 661, and assumed the leadership officially in July of that year. Muawiyah was a remarkably talented political leader and organizer. To him is due the establishment and the strength of the army of Syria, and especially the creation of the first Arab fleet.⁵⁹² He was, moreover, an excellent diplomat and was generous with funds without however being wasteful. If advantages were to be gained by the payment of money, he never hesitated to make payment. He never squandered funds⁵⁹³ and to keep his army in readiness, he paid generously as much as was required to keep his troops both contented and loyal.

Muawiyah's foremost objective was to dissolve the Byzantine Empire by capturing Constantinople. Despite his effort to bring this about, he succeeded only once in laying siege to the great citadel of Christendom.⁵⁹⁴ And despite his many and careful preparations and the numerous forces he was able to assemble, the grand assault ended in the total destruction of both his fleet and his army.

After the murder of Ali, Muawiyah succeeded in obtaining the support of Ziyad ben Abih who then held Persia. Ziyad was a bastard son of Abu Sufyan, father of Muawiyah, whom the family had not recognized. A powerful and exceptionally able leader, he had given much assistance to Ali and subsequently to Muawiyah when the latter recognized him as his legitimate brother. Initially, he was made military governor of Basra, then later of Kufa as well, the two largest political and military centres in the Eastern region of the Arab Empire from which centres, on

591. Vol. III of this history, pp. 141-143.

592. Lammens, *ETUDES SUR LE REGNE DU CALIFE MOAWIYA*.

593. Wellhausen, *THE ARAB KINGDOM* etc., pp. 138, 139.

594. I say once although it is true that in 668 his army had reached the shore opposite Constantinople. But this was in the nature of a razzia in which the fleet did not participate, and therefore the army could not possibly cross to the opposite shore. See Vol. III, Chapt. X, para. 5.

behalf of Muawiyah, he governed the whole of Persia, Mesopotamia, and the outlying districts.

In spite of the existing traditions, Muawiyah succeeded in obtaining the recognition of his son as his successor. It is certain that he had not personally demanded this. It was the choice of the various Djunds whose wish had been imposed upon the entire Arab Empire. There was of course opposition to such a choice, especially from Medina, on the part of the descendants of the Companions of the Prophet, but in the end, while he lived, he was able to overcome all opposition.

Muawiyah was a man of very liberal sentiments and displayed a great tolerance for the Christians. In A.D. 678-679, for example, a frightful earthquake had struck Mesopotamia causing much damage. The dome of the large church of Edessa and a part of the building was destroyed. Muawiyah instructed that the church be repaired at his own expense.⁵⁹⁵

Muawiyah died at Damascus in the month of Redjeb, in the 60th year of the Hegira. The precise day is disputed.⁵⁹⁶ He had reigned for 18 years and some nine months, and had served as

595. Theophanes, p. 356; Denys de Tell-Mahre, p. 9, but for the year 677-678; Chronicle of the year 819; Michael the Syrian, II, 457; Chronicle of the year 846, p. 176; Chronicle of the year 1234, p. 224.

596. Theophanes, p. 356, Anno Mundi, 6171, 1st Indiction. But the Indiction coincides with the years 6165 or 6180 (A.D. 688-689). He also writes that he reigned for 24 years, a totally unacceptable figure; Agapius, p. 226, says May of 680; Michael the Syrian, II, 468, the 63rd year of the Hegira (682); Elie Bar Sinaya, p. 91; Chronicle of the year 1234, pp. 224, 225, says the year 679 or the 11th of Constantine (678-679); Hamsa says he reigned 19 years, 3 months and 25 days; Eutychius, p. 1117, April 680; Tabari II, 196, the 60th of the Hegira, and after 19 years and 3 months; Maçoudi, V, 14, April 681 after ruling for 19 years and 8 months; Al-Makine, p. 52, the month of Redjeb in the 60th year of the Hegira (April 680); Abul Fedae, p. 110, the 60th year of the Hegira (April 680); Baethgen, on the basis of Kuwarazmi, the 60th year of the Hegira; Suyuti, p. 210, Redjeb, 60th year (April 680). Other sources could be quoted. Wellhausen, OP. CIT., p. 139, based on Wakidi, records that he died on April 18, 680; and April 680 is accepted by Marçais, LE MONDE ORIENTAL, pp. 201, 202; Becker, THE EXPANSION ETC., II, 359; Bury, OP. CIT., II, 314; Zambaur, MANUEL etc.; Lammens, OP. CIT.; Weil, I, 294-297; Caetani, Chronographia etc., p. 654, 655 and 672 f.; Müller, DER ISLAM usw., I, 357.

the generalissimo and governor of the Western provinces of the Empire for about 20 years. Before his death, Muawiyah established a regency to help Yazid govern with Dahhak ben Kais and Muslim ben Ukba. It has been maintained that when he died his son Yazid was not at Damascus⁵⁹⁷ but was in Byzantine territory, apparently to cover the withdrawal of the garrisons.⁵⁹⁸ But this cannot be possible in view of the fact that in this period peace existed between the two Empires. Some sources state that Yazid was in Damascus at the time.⁵⁹⁹ There exists also some doubt about the age at which Muawiyah died. At all events, he was between 78 and 80 years old.

II. *Yazid ibn Muawiyah*: Soon after the death of his father, Yazid was proclaimed Caliph. There appears to be some disagreement regarding his age when he assumed the imamate. One tradition has it that Yazid was born at Damascus in A.D. 642,⁶⁰⁰ another states that it was in the 25th year of the Hegira (A.D. 645-646),⁶⁰¹ and yet another, A.D. 650.⁶⁰² On account of the great hatred of subsequent Arab chroniclers, especially those of the Shi'a faction,⁶⁰³ Yazid appears in history as an inebriate, delighting in revels and debauchery, interested only in women, in the hunt, and in poetry.⁶⁰⁴ They tend to forget that Yazid was a great warrior and that in one of his campaigns against Constantinople he was struck by the smallpox.⁶⁰⁵ Yazid was in fact one of the most able of Caliphs. He had held the

597. Lammens, MOAWIYA, in E.I., III, p. 666.

598. Lammens, LE CALIFAT DE YAZID.

599. Caetani, OP. CIT., p. 654.

600. Lammens, YAZID, in E.I., old ed., III, 641.

601. Baethgen, based on Khuwarazmi, p. 111; Eliae Bar Sinaya, p. 85; Tabari, I, 2810; Michael the Syrian, II, 468.

602. Maçoudi, V, 126. But this is completely off the mark, for Maçoudi himself, on p. 170, records that when Yazid died after about 3½ years, his son was 22 years of age! This would mean that the latter could have been born when Yazid was only 12 years of age.

603. The Shi'as were the followers of Ali who claimed that the imamate, the highest office in Islam, belonged to the house of Ali and Fatimah, the direct descendants of Mohammed.

604. Ibn at-Tiqtaqa, Al Fakhri, p. 182; Maçoudi, V, 127.

605. Lammens, ETUDES SUR.... MUAWIYA.

Caliphate in a very difficult period when the Empire was weakened by internecine strife due to the ambitions of various leaders and tribes many of whom defied his authority. He was forced to take stern measures against these recalcitrants to restore some semblance of unity and order in the Arab domain.⁶⁰⁶ It is also a fact that Yazid was a musician and poet and a patron of the poets in his brief life time. He carried on the policy of his father which accounts for his retention of all the latter's retinue and ministers including the Syrian Sardjun who had established a sound financial policy. At the same time, he soon abolished the exemption from the land tax which the Samaritans had enjoyed and which had been given them by Abu Ubaydah over 40 years earlier.⁶⁰⁷

Yazid ordered the withdrawal of the Arab garrison of 12,000 men which had been stationed in Rhodes.⁶⁰⁸ It is true that the peace with Byzantium was still in force. Why the withdrawal from Rhodes had been so long delayed and why military clashes continued to take place in Africa between the Byzantines and Arabs is difficult to account for.

To strengthen further the defences of northern Syria, he established to the north of Antioch the Djund of Kinnesrin.⁶⁰⁹ Soon after the news of the death of Muawiyah and of the ascension of Yazid had reached Arabia, troubles broke out in the peninsula. The governor of Medina had demanded that all the tribal leaders give an oath of loyalty to Yazid. The former governor and an uncle of Yazid, Marwan ben Hakam, had urged his successor Walid ben Utbah to arrest Hussein ben Ali, second son of the Caliph Ali and leader of the Shi'a faction, and

606. Nomikos, INTRODUCTION etc., pp. 139 and f.

607. Baladhouri, OP. CIT., p. 244; Fattal Ant., LE STATUT LEGAL DES NON MUSULMANS, Beirut, 1958; Lammens, Yazid, in E.I., III, 1227.

608. Baladhuri, OP. CIT., 236; Lammens, OP. CIT.

609. A town of northern Syria named Chalcis by the Seleucid Nicator. In the age of Justinian I, in A.D. 550-551, it was rebuilt and its walls strengthened. See Procopius, ON THE BUILDINGS, ed. Haury, II, 8 and f. (p. 81). The Arabs had established there a strong garrison. Dussaud, TOPOGRAPHIE HISTORIQUE DE LA SYRIE, pp. 476, 477; Lammens, YAZID, in E.I., 216.

Abdallah ben Zubayr, before announcing Yazid's ascension to the supreme office, but to no avail. These two leaders categorically rejected any recognition of the new Caliph. Ibn Zubayr in fact soon fled to Mecca to be followed there two days later by Hussein with his family,⁶¹⁰ reaching the holy city in May 680. Mecca was considered an inviolable sanctuary.

Hussein received communications from his supporters urging him to proceed to Kufa, the centre of the Shi'a faction, to lead a revolt against Yazid. But the new governor of Kufa, Ubayd Allah ben Ziyad had got wind of the conspiracy and soon apprehended the couriers of Hussein and many of his followers and put them to death. In the meantime, accompanied by his supporters and his kinsmen, Hussein set out from Mecca and despite the warnings of those followers whom he encountered en route, he refused to turn back. At Karbala he gave battle to the army of Ziyad and fell heroically on October 10, 680⁶¹¹ at the age of 55 years. His family was taken captive and sent to Yazid who treated them with great deference and sent them back to Medina with all the honours befitting such a distinguished family.⁶¹²

Ibn Zubayr in the meantime declared Yazid as fallen from the imamate and reputedly proclaimed himself as the true Caliph. He succeeded finally in raising a revolt in Medina and the entire Hedjaz against Yazid. Faced with the rebellious situation, Yazid dispatched an army from Syria under Muslim ben Ukbah to suppress the insurrection. In the ensuing battle which took place before Medina on the 6th or 28th of August 683, the Medina faction was routed and the city was occupied by Muslim. Although Muslim was seriously ill, he wished to continue the campaign and advanced against Mecca but died en route.

610. Tabari, II, 216 and fol.; Ibn at Tiqtaqa, *Al Fakhri*, p. 182; Caetani, *OP. CIT.*, p. 656; Wellhausen *OP. CIT.*, pp. 145, 146; Müller, *OP. CIT.*, I, 358-365; Lammens in many monographs; Veccia Vaglieri, in *E.I.*, new ed., III, 628 and f., where there is a relevant detailed bibliography.

611. Maçoudi, V, 145 and fol.; Tabari, II, 295 f.; see also citations in fn. 610.

612. Caetani, *OP. CIT.*, p. 687; Müller, *OP. CIT.* I, 361-365.

Hussein ben Numair al Sakouni then assumed command and proceeded to Mecca to which he laid siege in September 683 for 64 days. Through an oversight of one of the defenders of Mecca the Kasbah caught fire. When news reached Hussein ben Numair of the death of Yazid, he raised the siege and withdrew to Medina which city he also finally abandoned.

Yazid died in Huwwarin⁶¹³ on the 10th or 11th of November 683.⁶¹⁴ The cause of his death is not known. According to Lammens, there are three possible reasons for his death: heart failure, a fall from a horse, or overdrinking.⁶¹⁵ He had reigned for three years and some seven months.⁶¹⁶ Before his death, he had designated as his heir his first-born son Muawiyah.⁶¹⁷

III. *Muawiyah II*: He was proclaimed Caliph on the 15th of Rebi I in the year 64 of the Hegira (November 683).⁶¹⁸ A sickly man, Muawiyah suffered from the jaundice, and because of his frail health he never had taken part in any military campaign and was consequently unknown to the rank and file of the soldiery. He enjoyed living as a recluse and left the running of the state to Dahhak ibn Kais, ibn Sardjun, and the Ummayd Walid ibn Utbah.⁶¹⁹ There is some question as to how old he was when he assumed the throne. Some chroniclers state that he was not of

613. An area between Damascus and Palmyra where Yazid had built a palace. He died and was buried there.

614. Theophanes says A.M. 6175 (A.D. 683); Eliae Metr. Nisibeni; Ibn at-Tiqtaqa, Al. Fakhri, p. 182; Suyuti, OP. CIT., p. 209; Elie Bar Sinaya, p. 92; Maçoudi, V, 126; Abul Fedae, pp. 116, 117; Baethgen, on the basis of Khuwarazmi; Tabari, II, 427 and f.; Nöldeke, ZUR GESCHICHTE usw.; Wellhausen, pp. 105-107; Caetani: CHRONOGRAPHIA, p. 734; Lammens, YAZID; Müller, OP. CIT., pp. 370, 371; Becker, OP. CIT., II, 360.

615. Lammens, LE CALIFAT DE YAZID.

616. Michael the Syrian, II, 468, says 3 years and 6 months; Al Makine, 3 years and 8 ½ months; Eutychius, 3 years and 8 months; Maçoudi, 3 years and 8 months; Makrizi, ed. Blochet, 3 years and 6 or 8 months; Abul Fedae, under 3 years; El Maqdisi, 3 years; Tabari, 3 years and 9 months; Ibn at-Tiqtaqa, Al Fakhri, 3½ years.

617. Maçoudi, V, 126.

618. Suyuti, OP. CIT., p. 213; Zambaur, p. 3.

619. Tabari, II, 468; Lammens, Moawia, II.

age,⁶²⁰ and others that he was between 20 and 25.⁶²¹ The situation was very complicated because of the enmity between the Kaisites⁶²² and the Kalb tribes⁶²³ of whom the mother of Muawiyah II was a member, and the Yemenites. Ibn Zubayr who had seized control of Medina ordered the expulsion of all the Umayyads. Among these was Marwan ben Hakam, who was a nephew of the Caliph Uthman and cousin of Yazid and had served as military governor of Medina and Mecca. Marwan fled to Syria.

There is some question also regarding the duration of Muawiyah's reign and the cause of his death. Most chroniclers agree that he was struck down by cholera which was then plaguing Syria. Others maintain that he was poisoned but that his murderer was unknown. He ruled for a period of between twenty days and six months.⁶²⁴

IV. *Marwan ben Al-Hakam*. The situation in the Arab Empire had deteriorated in the extreme. The cause was not only the personal ambitions of various leaders and tribal enmities.

620. Michael the Syrian, II, 468; Agapius, p. 234.

621. Maçoudi, OP. CIT., V, 168-170; Nöldeke justifiably argues that the Arabs never would have accepted as Caliph a minor and therefore his age was probably between 23 and 25 years. See in ZUR GESCHICHTE DER OMAIJADEN. Agreeing with him are Lammens, OP. CIT., Weil, CHALIFEN, I, 340, 341, or the English translation p. 104; and Nomikos, OP. CIT., p. 195.

622. The Kaisites were one of the most influential tribes of ancient Arabia who formerly dwelt in the vast and waterless stretches of the central and northern part of the peninsula. Gradually, even before the time of Mohammed, they had infiltrated Mesopotamia and northern Syria. Fischer, in E.I., old ed.

623. The Kalb was a federation of nomadic Syro-Arab tribes belonging to the larger group of Kufa. Initially they were Monophysitic Christians, and with those who had come from Yemen, they occupied the most fertile areas of Syria. Their power had been greatly enhanced by the marriage of Muawiyah with a daughter of a chieftan of one of their tribes. Lammens, in E.I., old ed.

624. Eliae, Metr. Nisibeni, says 2 months and 22 days; Ibn at-Tiqtaqa, Al Fakhri, p. 190, 40 days or 3 months; Tabari, 40 days; Eutychius, p. 1117, 40 days; Al Makine, p. 59, 45 days; Maçoudi, V, 168, 40 days to 2 months; Makrizi, OP. CIT., p. 67, 40 days to 3 months; Abul Fedae, pp. 116, 117, 3 months; Al Maqdisi, VI, 17, 18, 40 days to 3 months; Baethgen, on the basis of Khuwarazmi, 2 days to 2 months.

The movement of the capital city from Medina and Mecca had brought on the wrath of the Arabs of the peninsula who in turn were supported by the Arabs of Persia. All the tribes were on the move. The centres of Kufa, Bosra, Medina and the entire Hedjaz had come out in support of the faction of Abdallah ibn Zubayr.⁶²⁵ Following the death of Muawiyah II, Egypt and the Djund of Kinnesrin where the Kaisites were in the majority joined in and expelled the military governor who was a member of the Kalbs and a brother of the leader of the Kalbites, of Homs and of Palestine. The Djund of Jordan and a large part of the area round Damascus remained loyal to the Umayyads. Hassan ibn Malik ibn Bahtal, a close kinsman of Muawiyah I, and leader of the Kalbites had maintained that the imamate rightly should belong to the family of the Umayyads, at least in Syria.⁶²⁶

Dahhak wavered between the Umayyads and the faction of ibn Zubayr, but in the end supported the latter. Marwan had become disillusioned and had toyed with the idea of joining the same faction since Khaled, the second son of Yazid, would not be acceptable by the Arabs because of his youth (16 to 17 years of age). After numerous troubled scenes in the mosque of Damascus, it was agreed to assemble at Al-Djabiya⁶²⁷ to make a final choice. Marwan in the meantime was persuaded to put in his candidacy for the imamate. With the support of the Kalbites and the Yemenites, he was chosen Caliph and proclaimed as such at Al-Djabiya on the 22nd of June 684.

Dahhak refused to abide by the choice and departed in the direction of Damascus setting up his camp at Mardj Rahit.⁶²⁸ In the meantime, an insurrection had taken place at Damascus and

625. Theophanes for the year 6175 (A.D. 683-684); Agapius, p. 234; Tabari, II, 427 and f.; Maçoudi, V, 170; Wellhausen, ARAB KINGDOM etc., pp. 170 f.; Caetani, OP. CIT., p. 735; Lammens, L'AVENEMENT DES MARWANIDES, and his MARWAN BEN AL-HAKAM, in E.I., old ed.

626. Ibn at-Tiqtaqa, Al Fakhri, p. 191; Tabari, OP. CIT.; El Maqdisi, VI, 18-19; Suyuti, pp. 214-216; Lammens, OP. CIT.

627. One time capital of the kingdom of the Ghassanides. See Vol. II, p. 82 and fn. 320.

628. This is situated south of Merdj Ahdra to the east of Damascus. See Dussaud, TOPOGRAPHIE HISTORIQUE DE LA SYRIE ANTIQUE ET MEDIEVALE, p. 306, Paris, 1927.

the city fell into the hands of the Marwan faction.⁶²⁹

Marwan advanced against Mardj Rahit⁶³⁰ and gave battle. It is reputed that the bitterly fought struggle lasted for 20 days⁶³¹ and ended with the defeat and death of Dahhak. Marwan was thereupon recognized at Damascus as the Caliph in July or August of 684 after he nominated as his heir and successor Khaled, son of Yazid. Immediately thereafter he married Fakhita, widow of Yazid and mother of Khaled.

Once normalcy returned to Syria, Marwan advanced to take Egypt. After several battles and negotiations, he soon became the master of the country, leaving his son Abd al-Aziz as military governor of the province.

Marwan was an exceptional political leader with much experience in affairs of state, and gave solutions to problems only after considerable thought and deliberation. He was most efficient and displayed his many talents especially as the chief secretary of the Caliph Uthman for which reason he soon came to dominate Syria, Palestine, and Egypt.⁶³² According to the description of Eutychius, he was of tall stature, blond and blue-eyed. As soon as stability was restored, he succeeded by various means, through promises, payment of money, gifts and so on, to obtain the support of the Arab leaders of Syria including Hassan ibn Malik, chieftain of the Kalb tribes, all of whom he persuaded to accept the changes in his will and testament when he substituted as his heir and successor his very capable son Abd Al-Malik and his second son Abd Al Aziz⁶³³ in the place of Khaled ibn Yazid. Marwan was between 63 and 81 years of age,⁶³⁴ and had suffered much from the wounds he received on the day that Uthman was murdered and in the subsequent battles against Ali. He died after a reign of some nine

629. Caetani, *OP. CIT.*, p. 737; Wellhausen, p. 173.

630. Theophanes, p. 360; Michael the Syrian, II, 468; Agapius, p. 495.

631. Wellhausen, *OP. CIT.*, p. 173; Caetani, p. 735.

632. Lammens, *OP. CIT.*; Nomikos, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 195, 196.

633. Tabari, II, 576.

634. Maçoudi, V, 206-209; Tabari, II, 576-578.

months,⁶³⁵ on the 27th of Ramadan in the 65th year of the Hegira (7 May 685).⁶³⁶ At all events, his son Abd al-Malik was proclaimed Caliph on the 27th of Ramadan, or the 7th of May 685.⁶³⁷ There is, however, some doubt as to the manner of his death. The consensus today is that he died of the plague which was then sweeping Syria.⁶³⁸ However, some believe that he was murdered by his wife when he disinherited her son Khaled. But this tradition is probably a fantasy.⁶³⁹

V. *Abd Al-Malik* succeeded Marwan, but he was recognized as the Caliph only of Syria, Palestine, Egypt and part of Mesopotamia. He was one of the outstanding Caliphs of the Arab Empire. He was a man of action, daring and a fine warrior, but was not accepted by the whole of Arabia until after the death of the anti-Caliph which took place at the close of A.D. 692.⁶⁴⁰

VI. The anti-Caliph and recognized as the Caliph by the whole of the Arabian peninsula was Abdullah Ben Zubayr.

The latter two Caliphs lived in the age of Justinian II, and are therefore beyond the scope of this present volume.

635. Theophanes, p. 360; Michael the Syrian, II, 468, 469; Agapius, pp. 496, 497; Eutychius, p. 1117; Denys de Tell-Mahre, says one year; Al Makine, p. 61, 10 months; Ibn at-Tiqtaqa, pp. 192, 193; Tabari, p. 577; Makrizi, p. 68, 10 months; El Maqdisi, VI, 187, 7 months; Maçoudi, V, 207; Baethgen, on the basis of Khuwarazmi.

636. Wellhausen, p. 184; Lammens, *L'AVENEMENT* etc., and his *YAZID*; Müller, writes April 685; Caetani, p. 756, the beginning of Ramadan; Nöldeke, *OP. CIT.*

637. Zambaur, *MANUEL* etc., p. 3; Brockelmann, p. 74.

638. Maçoudi, V. 206. He records both traditions. Al Makine, p. 61.

639. Lammens, *OP. CIT.*

640. Gibb, in *E.I.*, new ed. for the entry *ABD ALLAH BEN ZUBAYR*; Suyuti, pp. 215-217.

CHAPTER IX

DEATH OF CONSTANTINE

The Greek chroniclers record that after the treaty of peace with the Arabs, the termination of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, and the treaty with the Bulgars, a universal period of peace reigned throughout the Empire. As has been pointed out, it appears that Yazid had renewed the treaty with the Greeks. No source indicates that the Byzantines had violated the terms of the treaty. On the other hand, the Arabs appear to have continued the attacks against the Empire as evidenced by the battles and the incursions of Ukba in Africa (see Chapter II). In view of Arab aggression, the Byzantines were forced to defend themselves. The Greek chroniclers made no reference to this period with the exception of Theophanes who writes (p. 361) that in Anno Mundi 6176 (A.D. 684), in the first year of Abd al-Malik's rule, the latter had urgently sought a renewal of the treaty.⁶⁴¹

The Arab chroniclers record that in the 64th (683-684) and 65th year of the Hegira (684-685), the Greeks invaded Arab territory and occupied both Germaniceia (Marash) and Melitene. In the same period,⁶⁴² the imperial fleet attacked Palestinian Caesareia, Ascalon and Acre. These three towns were destroyed by the Byzantines. The Arab chroniclers also report that in the 65th year (A.D. 684-685) an imperial army led by Constantine marched against Mopsuesta and that Abd

641. Dölger, REGESTEN, NO. 253; Caetani, OP.CIT., for the year 65. Theophanes, as usual, is off by one year. As stated in the previous chapter, Abd al-Malik was proclaimed Caliph in April of 685.

642. Baladhuri, pp. 219, 220, and in the Hitti edition, pp. 187, 188; Ibn al-Athir, pp. 117, 185 and 188; Caetani, CHRONOGRAPHIA, says the 64th and 65th year of the Hegira.

al-Malik was pressed to ask for a renewal of the peace treaty.^{642a} The treaty was renewed on July 7, 685 or the 5th of Dhou 'l-Kida, in the 65th year of the Hegira. Yet no Byzantine nor any Eastern source records the events for the years 682-685.

1

Constantine died in A.D. 685 after a reign of 17 years.⁶⁴³ All sources more or less agree concerning the date of his death and the length of his reign, irrespectively of whether most say 17 years while others maintain 16 because he died five days short of the 17th year of his rule. Moreover, all agree that he died of the dysentery.⁶⁴⁴ But there is disagreement regarding the month of his death. The Greek chroniclers report nothing of the matter. The *Liber Pontificalis*, on the other hand (I, p. 366), records that he died in early September of the 14th Indiction, hence the third of September 685. Most contemporary historians accept such a dating.⁶⁴⁵ This chronology was supported more recently by Grumel in two monographs just before he died.⁶⁴⁶ Grumel undoubtedly based his computations on the L.P., but to arrive at the precise date of the Emperor's death, he cited the *Synaxarium of Constantinople*⁶⁴⁷ to argue that the Constantine mentioned in this book as having died on September 3 is none other than

642a. Caetani, *OP. CIT.*, p. 757 who uses mostly Tabari and Baethgen. This latter information is rejected by Wellhausen. I feel I must again point out that Constantine was not a warrior and therefore this information is most improbable.

643. Theophanes, p. 361; Cedrenus, p. 770; Zonaras, III, 320; Nicephorus, p. 36; Eutychius, p. 1116, who says after a reign of 16 years; Constantine Porphyrogennetus, *De Adm. Imp.*, I, 88.

644. Glycas, p. 520; Joel, p. 48.

645. Ostrogorsky, *OP. CIT.*, p. 129; Bréhier, *OP. CIT.*, V, 191; Wellhausen, *OP. CIT.*, p. 428.

646. Grumel, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. 84, 1966. *QUEL EST L'EMPEREUR CONSTANTIN*, in the same *Analecta*, Vol. 84, pp. 254-260, 1966.

647. *SYNAXARIUM ECCLESIAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*, ed. H. Delahaye, p. 12, 'and of the most holy and young Emperor Constantine in the Church of the Apostles'.

Constantine IV. The same contention was made by Gedeon⁶⁴⁸ many years earlier when he attempted to give various interpretations of the epithet 'as a young man'. Nicodemus of Mt. Athos,⁶⁴⁹ on the other hand, identified this Constantine with the son of Heraclius. But Constantine II died in May and not September. However, F. Halkin⁶⁵⁰ shattered these theories by arguing, and in my view correctly so, that the Constantine in question was the first-born son of Basil I who had died at a very tender age (A.D. 879) after which the bereaved father, who had been very fond of him, refused to receive anyone for six months. It was not until March 3, 880, or exactly six months after the loss of his son that Basil received a delegation from the 8th Ecumenical Council of Constantinople which presented to him the decisions of the Councils, whereas it was always the custom hitherto for the Emperor to preside over the synods, at least at the opening sessions.

Another source recording the date of Constantine's death is the Obituary,⁶⁵¹ which although included in a Latin chronicle is a translation from the Greek original dating before the 10th Century. The Obituary reports that Constantine IV died on the 10th of July 685, a date also accepted by Grierson.⁶⁵²

Since Constantine IV succeeded his father on the latter's death on July 15, 668, the date July 10 would mark 17 years of his reign less five days, for if he had died in September, then his death would have occurred in the 18th year of his reign.

Another question arises regarding the age at which he died. Ostrogorsky,⁶⁵³ without citing his sources, maintains that he was 33. The sources record that when he ascended the throne, his son Justinian was 16 or 17 years old, and therefore he was born in

648. E. Gedeon, 'ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR', p. 165, Constantinople, 1899.

649. SYNAXARIUM, First ed., Venice, 1819, 3rd ed. Zante, 1864.

650. TROIS DATES PRECISEES GRACE AU SYNAXAIRE, in Byz. 24 (1054) pp. 14-17.

651. CHRONICON ALTINATE ET GRADENSE, ed. Cessi.

652. Grierson, TOMBS AND OBITS etc.; Morisson, MONNAIES etc., Vol. I, 373.

653. Ostrogorsky, OP. CIT., p. 129.

668 or 669, whereas his father married in 667-668. By such computation, Constantine IV should have been born in 652 and should have been married when he was 15 or 16 years of age!

As pointed out in the first chapter, Constantine IV was born in about A.D. 650 and therefore was 35 when he died.

Constantine was buried in the church of the Holy Apostles in the mausoleum of Justinian the Great.⁶⁵⁴ He was interred in a bier of Sangarian marble near his wife Anastasia.⁶⁵⁵ There is some disagreement as to whether the sarcophagus was of Sangarian or Thessalian marble or of Thessaloniki marble,⁶⁵⁶ but this need not detain one. Of interest is the fact that he was buried near his wife, but she had died later than he. In that period of history, life expectancy was under 33 years, and therefore 'as a young man' would certainly not have applied to a person who had lived beyond the middle age. Moreover, it does not indicate that he was buried with his wife; only that he was interred in a tomb of white stone.

2

The death of Constantine came at a most inopportune time for Byzantium. Despite his mistakes, he had succeeded in establishing some semblance of order and in checking the Arabs. But his sickly nature combined with his character and his tendency to seek compromise whenever the opportunity arose, curbed any aggressive policy, and he readily accepted the frontiers of A.D. 680 as final. This accounts for his not taking advantage of the Armenian affiliation. The Armenians had

654. Constantine Porphyrogennetus, *De Cer.* II, Chapt. 42; Codinus, in Migne, P.G., Vol. 157; Banduri, *IMPERII ORIENTALI*, Vol. I, p. 121ff., Paris, 1711; *CHRONICON ALTINATE* etc., p. 108; Grierson, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 30 and 32.

655. Constantine's wife died after A.D. 711. The sources indicate that she was buried in the same tomb as her husband.

656. Banduri, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 121-124, and in Vol. II, pp. 807-816; Codinus, *OP. CIT.*, pp. 725 and f.; *CHRONICON ALTINATE* etc., *OP. CIT.*, p. 108. According to Grierson, *OP. CIT.*, p. 50, the bier was of Thessalian marble. See also Downey, *THE TOMBS* etc.

thrown off Arab control and renewed their alliance with the Empire, thus enabling Byzantium to restore its gold supplies from Armenia and to open the trade routes for raw materials and the precious metal from central Asia. Yet Constantine did not take full advantage of this new development. Unfortunately, his son who succeeded him was yet very young, some 16 or 17 years of age, and consequently could not grasp the significance of the moment, nor take maximum advantage of the opportunity which had been given to the Empire. At a time when Byzantium needed a determined, experienced and aggressive Emperor, Constantine IV ascended the throne, a man whom indeed all held in esteem, but who by nature was not a warrior and had in addition a sickly constitution.

The period from 681 to 685 was for Byzantium one of relative peace and order, and but for occasional friction with the Arabs, who from time to time had violated the treaty, the Empire lived in peace. The church of Rome had succeeded in imposing its religious dogma on Constantinople and had also persuaded the Byzantines to sign a definitive peace with the Lombards. This put an end to the need for the dispatch of reinforcements to the Italian peninsula.

The adherence of the Eastern church to the so-called Orthodox dogma naturally reunited Rome with Constantinople ecclesiastically, and all religious disputes between the two ceased. Yet it brought negative results for the Empire because its Eastern provinces were forever lost to Byzantium. It is true that the populations of these areas did not cease being Christians, but they looked upon the Byzantines as heretics, and were therefore less disliked with their Moslem masters. Another unfavourable result was the displeasure of the inhabitants of southwestern Asia Minor, the majority of whom were Monothelites. This displeasure resulted in the mutiny of the Anatolikon theme.

After the defeat of Uqba, peace reigned in Africa and there was no need for further troop reinforcements on the part of the Empire.

In the Balkans, following the suppression of the revolts of the various 'Sclavinian' tribes, and the removal of the threat of attack from the Arab fleet which had been destroyed, the Hellas

theme was in a position to restore peace and order in the southern areas of the Balkans.

Only two very serious and potentially dangerous enemies remained, the Arabs and the Bulgars. As pointed out in Chapter II, despite the renewals of the truce with the Arabs, the latter repeatedly violated the treaty, thus compelling the Empire to take counter-measures. These were successful but could have resulted in even greater advantages, for the Arabs were in difficult straits. Yazid had sent his army against Medina and Mecca without being able to suppress the rebellion before his death. Marwan succeeded in reconquering Egypt only after much effort. Abd al-Malik was recognized as the Caliph only by Syria, Palestine and Egypt. The remainder of the Arab Empire supported Abdallah ben Zubayr. Abd-al-Malik's position was indeed very precarious. His army which was the backbone of the Arab Empire was preoccupied with operations against the rival Caliph. The Byzantines had penetrated deeply into Armenia and Mesopotamia, and the Mardaites had again risen in revolt. This was an ideal period in which the Byzantine Empire could have not necessarily crushed the Arab power, but at least occupied long-lost territories which would have bolstered their future defense, or provided jumping-off points for offensives against the Arab-occupied provinces. And the Greeks were in a position to undertake such moves. Abd-al-Malik therefore hastened to ask for a renewal of the peace treaty. It is difficult to account for Constantine's readiness to accept Malik's terms and to withdraw his army from the territories which his army had occupied. It may have been his sickly constitution or his intense dislike of war.

But the gravest oversight, and indeed of the first magnitude, for the Byzantine Empire which was to pay for it very dearly in the future, was to permit the Bulgars to occupy the area between the Haemus range and the Danube. As has been pointed out in Chapter V, the Bulgars were a bellicose race but were not numerous. The Slavs, as repeatedly brought out, were not militarily inclined and enjoyed living in their peaceful pursuits of farming and sheep herding. In A.D. 682, 683, and 684, Byzantium was at peace with the world and the Emperor could

easily enough have concentrated a large army and fleet to expel the invaders from this strategic area. Had such a move been made, the Bulgars would have been unable to organize themselves more thoroughly, and to have absorbed or transformed the Slavic populations into a warlike nation. It is difficult to account for Constantine's inaction in a matter that had been the primary concern of his father and his grandfather. At the time he had not been overcome by his illness and therefore the lack of initiative on his part can only be justified by his aversion to battle and the military campaign. It is a fact that he had never fought or participated in any military operations. Constantinople was preserved thanks to the invention of Callinicus, and Constantine's presence in the campaign against the Bulgars was unfortunate, for his sudden departure without giving battle was the signal for the disastrous rout. In my judgment, to describe Constantine IV as a worthy Emperor is not only an exaggeration, but conflicts with the facts.

Constantine IV was indeed a good man, a devout Christian, but as an Emperor he brought irreparable harm to Byzantium.

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The Bibliography includes the works that I read or consulted for the present volume. As has been pointed out in the other volumes, the present Bibliography is not by any means exhaustive.

The principal abbreviations in use are the following:

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BYZ.	— <i>Byzantion</i> , Brussels.
B.Z.	— <i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i> , Leipzig and Munich.
C.E.H.	— <i>Cambridge Economic History</i> , Cambridge.
C.M.H.	— <i>Cambridge Medieval History</i> , Cambridge.
Constantin Porphyrogenitus	
De Cer	— <i>De Ceremoniis</i> .
De Adm. Imp.	— <i>De Administrando Imperio</i> .
De Them.	— <i>De Thematribus</i> .
C.S.C.O.	— <i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i> .
D.O.P.	— <i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i> , Washington.
E.E.B.S.	— <i>Annual of the Society of Byzantine Studies</i> , Athens.
E.H.R.	— <i>English Historical Review</i> , London.
E.I. o. ed.	— <i>Encyclopédie de l'Islam</i> , old edition.
E.I. n. ed.	— <i>Encyclopédie de l'Islam</i> , new edition.
E.O.	— <i>Echos d'Orient</i> , Paris.
Goeje, B.G.A.	— <i>Bibliotheca Geographorum Araborum</i> , Leyden.
Goeje, F.H.A.	— <i>Fragmenta Historicorum Araborum</i> , Leyden.
J.A.	— <i>Journal Asiatique</i> , Paris.
J.H.S.	— <i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i> , London.
L.P.	— <i>Liber Pontificalis</i> , ed. Duchêsne.
M.G.H.	— <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i> .
Migne, P.G.	— <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus</i> , Series Graeca.
Migne, P.L.	— <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus</i> , Series Latina.
P.O.	— <i>Patrologia Orientalis</i> , Graffin and Nau.
R.E.B.	— <i>Revue des Etudes Byzantines</i> , Paris.
S.O.C.	— <i>Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitarum</i> .
Viz. Vr.	— <i>Vizantiniski Vremenic</i> , Moscou.

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